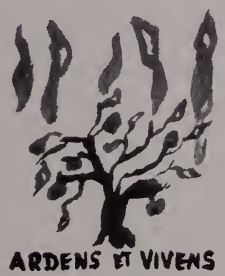
Studies in
REFORMED THEOLOGY
AND
HISTORY



Volume 2 Number 1
Winter 1994

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Studies in
REFORMED THEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Editorial Offices
Princeton Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542-0803
FAX (609) 497-7829

REFORMED ECCLESIOLOGY
Trinitarian Grace According to Calvin

REFORMED ECCLESIOLOGY
Trinitarian Grace According to Calvin

PHILIP W. BUTIN

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Studies in Reformed Theology and History is published four times annually by Princeton Theological Seminary. All correspondence should be addressed to David Willis-Watkins, Editor, Studies in Reformed Theology and History, P.O. Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542 0803, USA. Fax (609) 497-7829.

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS

Contributions to Studies in Reformed Theology and History are invited. Copies of printed and electronic manuscript requirements are available upon request from the Editor at the above address.

COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSIONS

Printed in the United States of America.

ISSN: 1067-4268

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Contents

Editor's Foreword

Whether one chooses to speak about the structure of Calvin's thought or the changing emphases which emerged in his development, that he was a trinitarian theologian has been clear from the outset. What the features of his doctrine of the Trinity were, how and in what ways his doctrine developed, how his understanding of the Trinity functioned in relation to the rest of his theology and ethics—these matters have also been long debated and merit continued pursuit. Philip Butin's study makes a significant contribution to this discussion.

At first blush, it might seem evident that grace—so central a reality to which belief is a response and by which the response comes about—would have been understood in a trinitarian perspective by Calvin, whose aim was the reform of the Catholic church. However, what is especially fruitful is seeing the consistency with which Calvin defines grace by his doctrine of God and vice versa. This study points out the implications of this consistency for ecclesiology, and then for the Church's relation to culture.

Philip Butin's essay engages in the debates concerning the role of the Church in the variously defined cultures of contemporary pluralism. Tracing the thoroughness of Calvin's trinitarian understanding of grace is also of special importance in the contemporary debates about the future direction of modern ecumenism. There are a number of uncompleted agendas in the dialogues among traditions and confessional bodies. Other matters have preempted much of the energies required for the continued historical, biblical, liturgical, dogmatic work which subsequent inter-confessional dialogues require. Studies like the present one will provide material for discussion when such dialogues are seriously resumed.

Philip Butin completed his doctoral studies at Duke University, served a parish in Oxford, North Carolina, and is presently pastor of the Shepherd of the Valley Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

David Willis-Watkins

Introduction

Because of rapid changes taking place in American society, a radical reconceptualization of the cultural role of the mainline churches is in process.[1] This has led to something of an "identity crisis" within mainstream Protestantism, not the least within its Reformed denominations.

In the post-World War II era, H. R. Niebuhr's classic work *Christ and Culture*[2] influenced an entire generation of Reformed theologians and ethicists, who saw his "Christ the Transformer of Culture" motif as a particularly helpful and authentically Reformed approach to this perennial interface.[3] In that period, the vision of the church as a significant agent of cultural transformation seemed not only plausible, but compelling to many. Enough of a Judeo-Christian moral consensus existed at various levels of American society that the church was able to contribute significantly to positive moral transformation in the broader culture. Often, such transformation was accomplished through the active participation of mainline churches and their members in public political processes.

Since the late sixties, however, a significant change in the way the broader society regards the old mainline churches and their efforts to shape American culture has become increasingly obvious. More and more, all Christian churches, mainline and otherwise, are culturally marginalized. A growing polarization between divergent moral visions of America's future is evident.[4] In

[1] See for only a few examples: Loren Mead, *The Once and Future Church* (Washington: Alban Institute, 1991); Douglas John Hall, *An Awkward Church* (Louisville: Theology and Worship Occasional Paper #5, Presbyterian Church [USA]); M. Coalter, J. Mulder, L. Weeks, eds. *The Presbyterian Presence: The Twentieth Century Experience*, 7 vols. (Louisville: WJK, 1989–92), esp. Vol. 7, *The Re-Forming Tradition* (Louisville: WJK, 1992); J. Carroll and W. McKinney, eds. *Beyond Establishment: Protestant Identity in a Post-Protestant Age* (Louisville: WJK, 1993).

[2] New York: Harper and Row, 1951.

[3] Ibid., 190–229.

[4] For one helpful analysis of this polarization, see John Davidson Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

response, Stanley Hauerwas,[5] John Howard Yoder,[6] and others outside the Reformed tradition have begun to suggest that refinements of Niebuhr's "conversionist type" will need to be made, particularly with regard to what Niebuhr himself called its "more positive and hopeful attitude towards culture"[7] if the church is to remain an agent of Christ's transformation in the growingly polarized American cultural situation. In this new climate, it is argued, if the church wishes to be taken seriously by the surrounding culture, it's chief political task and the only means at its disposal for the transformation of society is to be the church itself, visibly exemplifying in its life and witness a radical, countercultural social structure shaped by the vision of God's kingdom.[8]

Times of sweeping cultural change have often afforded unique opportunities for the church better to understand itself in light of its historical commitments and convictions. Reformed Christians will want to consider these controversial and interesting suggestions in light of their own constitutive theological sources. What follows is an effort to highlight previously overlooked themes in just one of those Reformed sources, the thought of John Calvin, themes that have important implications for the current cultural challenge facing the old mainline churches. Perhaps with the contemporary waning of both "Christendom" and "modernity" may come a new openness to bringing not only what is new, but also what is old from the treasure of the church.[9] Contrary to stereotypical popular perceptions about sixteenth cen-

[5] S. Hauerwas and W. Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) 39 ff.; Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom?* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991).

[6] J. H. Yoder, *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

[7] H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 191 ff. Niebuhr's description of the "conversionist" type builds on the "dualist" type, but he uses the phrase quoted (its "more positive and hopeful attitude towards culture") to distinguish them. He points out three theological convictions in which the two differ: 1) The "conversionist" type adds an emphasis on the good possibilities of a redeemed and renewed creation for reflecting God's purposes; 2) The fall is seen as a reversal, rather than a continuation, of creation, and so the "conversionist" seeks the "rebirth" of authentic human culture according to God's original creative intention; 3) The "conversionist" type maintains a view of history as a dramatic interaction between God and human beings in which "all things are possible," and in which the transformation of human culture according to God's sovereign purpose is the church's goal. Niebuhr is aware that in pure form his "conversionist" type actually goes beyond the purview of the biblical writers. Thus, in his exposition of the "conversionist" theme in John's gospel, he concludes with the admission that even John—whom he takes to be its best biblical exponent—"has combined the conversionist motif with the separatism of the Christ-against culture school of thought" (*Christ and Culture*, 205). Yet he strongly suggests that the reluctance of the New Testament writers to embrace "a hope for the conversion of the whole of humanity in all its cultural life" indicates a short-sighted limitation of *their* vision, rather than a triumphalistic overextension of vision on the "conversionist's" part.

[8] Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens*, 36–48.

[9] Cf. Matthew 13:52, and Calvin's comments on it in *Harmony of the Gospels*, Vol. II. Quo-

tury Geneva, important historical studies have reinforced the fact that Calvin's ecclesiology was fashioned with primary reference to a church in exile—a church which sought to be an agent of cultural transformation even in the midst of great hostility and opposition.[10]

Based on this crucial premise, I will offer a forthrightly contemporary reassessment of Calvin's understanding of the church's being, worship, and ministry. Specifically, I will argue that at the most basic theological level, Calvin sees the church as *a visible embodiment, enactment, and reflection of the trinitarian grace of God in the world.* I will begin by calling attention to the trinitarian character of Calvin's broader Christian vision, and his ecclesiology in particular. Next, important trinitarian themes in Calvin's ecclesiology which undergird his own emphasis on *the church as a visible means of God's trinitarian grace* will be noted. In the process, the outlines of a refined Reformed "transformationalist" paradigm for the relationship of church and world will be highlighted. It is a paradigm in which the church's being, worship, and ministry flow from the trinitarian grace of God, and the church's call is to render that grace visible through embodying, enacting, and reflecting it in its specific cultural context. In a brief conclusion, I will suggest some ways in which Calvin's insights may help to release mainline Reformed churches from our currently binding and limiting dependence upon the broader culture and the state for our self-understanding, credibility, and effectiveness. My hope is that my suggestions, emerging as they do from "what is old" in the church's treasure, may help contemporary Reformed churches be more effective agents of Christ's transformation of culture in the new, more oppositional relationship between the two which now characterizes the changing American context.

---

tations from Calvin's New Testament commentaries in what follows are based on the Torrance edition (*Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. D. W. and T. F. Torrance, 12 Vols. [Edinburgh: St. Andrew, 1959–]), with my own emendations where necessary from the Latin text of *In Novum Testamentum Comentarii*, ed. A. Tholuck, Amsterdam Edition (Berlin: Gustavum Eichler, 1833).

[10] Cf. Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Coming Wars of Religion in France (1553–1563)* (Genève: Librarie E. Droz, 1956), and *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement (1564–1572)* (Genève: Librarie Droz, 1967); cf. Heiko Oberman, "John Calvin: The Mystery of His Impact," in *Calvin Studies VI* (Davidson: Davidson College Presbyterian Church, 1992) 1–14.

The Trinity in Calvin's Thought

Ever since F. C. Baur's three-volume study of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity (1843),[11] much of Reformation interpretation has minimized the doctrine of the Trinity in the thought of the magisterial reformers. The tendency of some interpreters has been to view that doctrine as little more than a traditional and formal convention, intended primarily to establish the historical orthodoxy of Protestant theology. Where Baur's influence has prevailed, it has come to be widely assumed that the doctrine of the Trinity as such was on the periphery of Calvin's concern.

I have sought to overcome this influence elsewhere,[12] based first on a close examination of Calvin's little-known and largely polemical writings in the so-called anti-trinitarian controversies, and second, on a reassessment of the theological role of the Trinity in his thought in general. I believe that the doctrine of the Trinity served as a pervasive—if often implicit—overarching paradigm for the divine-human relationship in Calvin's thought. In addition, I have argued that Calvin's trinitarian way of understanding the divine-human relationship makes several important contributions to the history of the doctrine of the Trinity in the West.[13] In this context I will mention only two.

The first arises from Calvin's pervasive concern to develop all doctrine not from abstract or philosophically-rooted speculation about the divine being, but rather from careful exegesis of specific biblical texts. It is well-known that the New Testament's concern for what later came to be called the doctrine of the Trinity is fundamentally economic and soteriological: it arises from the

[11] F. C. Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung Gottes in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Vol. III (Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1843), see esp. 24 ff., 42 ff.

[12] P. W. Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Cf. the earlier dissertation version, entitled *Calvin, the Trinity, and the Divine-Human Relationship* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1991).

[13] Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, especially chapter 3 and the Conclusion.

need to explain the interacting roles of God the Father, Son, and Spirit in the economy of human salvation. Similarly, Calvin's articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity is also predominantly economic. This is to say that where the Trinity is concerned, Calvin's primary concern is not so much with the intra-trinitarian relationships of the three *hypostaseis*, or with the perennial "problem" of relating the three persons to the single divine *ousia*, but rather with the way the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit interact in making the divine-human relationship possible and actual. This is not to minimize Calvin's profound commitment to the doctrinal formulations of Nicene orthodoxy, which was powerfully—if unfortunately—evident in his response to Servetus and the Italian anti-Nicene heretics who confronted him in Geneva. It is simply to emphasize that for Calvin, the God of scripture—the true God with whom Christian believers have to do—is simply and solely the God who reveals the divine nature, redeems the people of God, and constitutes human response to God definitively in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

Simply put, for Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity *is* the doctrine of God. The final structure of the 1559 *Institutes* makes this clear.[14] There, any discrete enumeration of divine attributes is conspicuously absent.[15] Rather, the doctrine of God is developed in trinitarian terms from the outset, in the context of Calvin's effort to show how the true God is to be distinguished from idols. This insight was certainly not original to Calvin. It was present in various degrees in the thought of important early church theologians. But it soon became overshadowed in the tradition by speculative attempts to understand the divine being in philosophical categories. Its importance to mainstream Christian theology is evident on a broadly ecumenical scale.[16] Calvin's re-

[14] J. Calvin, *Opera Selecta* III, ed. P. Barth and W. Niesel (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1926); 1559 *Institutes* I.11–13. (ET tr. F. L. Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

[15] Efforts to construe 1559 *Institutes* I.10 as such a discrete enumeration of divine attributes are less than convincing; cf. note 1 on page 120 of the Battles translation at I.13.1. They are obliged to decontextualize that brief section, detaching it from its strategic purpose in Calvin's larger argument that the worship of anything less than the triune God of scripture is idolatry. Rather, the purpose of this section in context is to show that all authentic knowledge of God's nature must derive from the biblical narrative of the divine-human relationship, which, as he indicates clearly in the argument of I.13.1–15, identifies God as triune.

[16] Among representative examples are the Roman Catholic treatments of Karl Rahner (*The Trinity*, tr. J. Donceel [New York: Herder, 1970]), Walter Kasper (*The God of Jesus Christ*, tr. M. J. O'Connell [New York: Crossroad, 1984]), and Catherine Mowry LaCugna (*God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* [San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991]); the Orthodox treatment of Boris Bobrinskoy (*Le Mystère de la Trinité: Cours de théologie orthodoxe* [Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1986]; the Lutheran discussion by Robert Jenson (*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, ed. C. Braaten and R. Jenson [Phila.: Fortress, 1984] 79–191); the Reformed treatments of Moltmann (*The Trinity and the Kingdom*, tr. M. Kohl [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981]), and T. F. Torrance (*The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* [Edinburgh: T. & T.

markably clear articulation of it in the sixteenth century deserves our notice and our appreciation.

The second factor that is important for our present topic is that Calvin's way of understanding and articulating the relationships and interaction of the trinitarian *hypostaseis* in the economic realm has remarkable points of contact with the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *perichoresis.* In Calvin's *locus* on the Trinity in 1559 *Institutes* I.13, he appeals at a crucial point in his argument to a well-known statement of Gregory Nazianzen in order to explain the unity of the three divine *hypostaseis.* This comment of Gregory's has typically been an important source for the doctrine of *perichoresis* in the Eastern tradition:

> And that passage in Gregory of Nazianzus vastly delights me: "I cannot think on the one without quickly being encircled by the splendor of the three; nor can I discern the three without being straightaway carried back to the one." Let us not, then, be led to imagine a Trinity of persons which includes an idea of separation, and does not at once lead us back to that unity.[17]

Though he does not use the term *perichoresis* itself (or its Latin equivalent), he goes on to clarify the nature of the divine unity by means of strikingly similar conceptions.[18]

Clark, 1988]); the Anglican discussions of David Brown (*The Divine Trinity* [LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1985]) and Colin Gunton (*The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991]); and the Methodist approach of Geoffrey Wainwright (*Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* [New York: Oxford, 1981], but perhaps articulated most clearly in "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Where the Church Stands or Falls," *Interpretation* 45:2 [April 1991] 117–132). For a representative sampling of recent ecumenical interest in the Trinity, see *Modern Theology* 2:3 (April, 1986).

[17] Calvin, *Opera Selecta* III, 131; 1559 *Institutes* I.13.17. Calvin quotes Gregory (in Greek) from *Oratio*, 40, 41: *In sanctum baptisma*. The passage was original in the 1539 *Institutes* in IV.28 (Cf. Richard F. Wevers, ed. *Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin 1539: Text and Concordance*, Vol. I [Grand Rapids: Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, 1988], 103).

[18] Cf. T. F. Torrance, *Theological Dialogue Between Orthodox and Reformed Churches* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), esp. 3–18; "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin," in *Calvin Studies V* (Davidson: Davidson College Presbyterian Church, 1990), 12–13; and "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," *Calvin Theological Journal* 25:2 (Nov. 1990), 190 ff. Torrance calls attention to Calvin's use of the Cyprianic expression *in solidum* (*Institutes* IV.2.6, IV.6.17, etc.), which he sees as a key to Calvin's understanding of the unity of the divine *hypostaseis.*

In this discussion of Calvin, we use the term *perichoresis* broadly, to refer to ways of understanding the unity of the three *hypostaseis* which focus on their mutual indwelling or inexistence, their intimate interrelationship, and their constantly interacting co-operation. There is, of course, an implied contrast with more typically "Western" approaches which assume the unity of God as "given" and concentrate on explaining theoretically how this God can exist in three persons.

Jan Koopmans briefly points out Calvin's perichoretic emphasis in *Das Altkirchliche Dogma*

> The Father is said to be in Christ because in Him full divinity dwells and displays its power. And Christ, in His turn, is said to be in the Father because by His divine power He shows that He is one with the Father.[19]

I have only to refer to the obvious *perichoresis* of Word and Spirit in Calvin's doctrine of scripture, to Calvin's pioneering efforts to interrelate justification and sanctification in Book III of the 1559 *Institutes*, or to the crucial role of the Spirit in making tangible and real the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper to illustrate briefly how this perichoretic understanding of the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit in the economy of the divine-human relationship expressed itself consistently throughout his broader thought.

---

in der Reformation (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1955), 68–69, but does not draw out its implications. The trinitarian use of the term *perichoresis* seems to originate with Pseudo-Cyril (*De Trinitate* 10, J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graecae* [Paris, 1886–], 77.1144B), and the idea is classically stated in John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* 1.8 (*Writings*, tr. F. H. Chase [Washington: Catholic University of America, 1958]), a work which was familiar to Calvin. Verna Harrison has recently published an excellent and comprehensive survey of the concept, its patristic development, and the relevant literature; see "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 35:1 (1991) 53–65, which is critical of the earlier influential treatment of G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952), 282–301. Harrison argues that "Stoic mixture theory" provides the proper linguistic context for the term's most basic meaning of "a complete mutual interpenetration of two substances that preserves the identity and properties of each intact" (54). Given Calvin's economic-trinitarian emphasis, it is especially important for our purposes that she shows the idea was not limited to intra-trinitarian relationships, but was often used to refer to the interpenetration of God and creation which occurs in God's gracious dealings with human beings (58–59, 62–65).

[19] *Comm. John* on 14:10. The fact that the Spirit is not mentioned is a function of the text to which Calvin is responding. However, note the emphasis on the mutual exercise of divine power, in light of Calvin's description of the Spirit as the efficacy and power of God's action (Cf. 1559 *Institutes* I:13.18, 22).

The Church: Visible Embodiment of God's Trinitarian Grace

By setting his discussion of the church[20] within the broader economic-trinitarian framework of the Apostles' Creed, Calvin helpfully framed it in terms of the gracious work of the triune God.[21] The fourth book of the 1559 *Institutes* is entitled, "The External Means or Supports by Which God Invites

[20] Helpful treatments on the larger context of Reformation ecclesiology which have informed the following discussion include J. Courvoisier, *La Notion d'Église chez Bucer* (Paris: Lib. R. Alcan, 1933); J. T. McNeill, "The Church in Sixteenth Century Reformed Theology," *Journal of Theology* 22 (1942) 251–269; Wilhelm Pauck, "The Idea of the Church in Christian History," *Church History* 21:3 (1952) 191–214; T. F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956); Gordon Rupp, "Luther and the Doctrine of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 9 (1956) 384–392; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 11–158, and *Spirit vs. Structure* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 1–49; Benno Gassmann, *Ecclesia Reformata: Die Kirche in den reformierten Benkenntnisschriften* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968); Paul Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981); and Gottfried Hammann, *Entre la Secte et la Cité: le projet d'Église du Réformateur Martin Bucer (1491–1551)* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1984).

Specific aspects of Calvin's understanding of the church are treated in Doumergue, *Jean Calvin: les hommes et les choses de son temps*, vol. V (Lausanne: G. Bridel, 1902), 3–380; W. Kolfhaus, *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin* (Neukirchen: Buchandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1939), 86–107; G. D. Henderson, "Priesthood of Believers," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7:1 (1954) 1–15; E. Buess, "Prädestination und Kirche in Calvins Institutio," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 12:3 (1956) 347–361; Geddes McGregor, *Corpus Christi: The Nature of the Church According to the Reformed Tradition* (Phila.: Westminster, 1958), 1–65; John Burkhart, *Kingdom, Church, and Baptism: The Significance of the Doctrine of the Church in the Theology of John Calvin* (Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1959), 92–163; Alexandre Ganoczy, *Calvin: Théologien de l'Église et du Ministère* (Paris: ed. du Cerf, 1964), 182–222; Kilian McDonnell, *Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); Benjamin Milner, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970); H. Scholl, *Calvinus Catholicus* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 153–193; W. Neuser, "Calvin's Teaching on the *nota fidelium*: An Unnoticed Part of the *Institutio* 4.1.8," tr. M. Burrows, *Probing the Reformed Tradition*, ed. E. McKee and B. Armstrong (Louisville: WJK, 1989), 79–95; David N. Wiley, "The Church as the Elect in the Theology of Calvin," *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. T. George (Louisville: WJK, 1990), 96–117.

[21] François Wendel recognizes this implicitly when, in the first sentence of his chapter on "The External Means," he begins, "The fourth Book of the *Institutes* of 1559, which deals with

Us into the Society of Christ and holds us therein." As the starting point for his broader concern to emphasize the various corporeal, tangible means by which God's gracious trinitarian relationship with human beings becomes visible in human experience, Calvin focuses first on the church itself as a visible means of God's trinitarian grace.

The Visible Church as Chosen: Unconditional Grace

Whatever else may be said about Calvin's controversial doctrine of election and its later development in the Reformed tradition, it appears to find its fundamental motivation in ecclesiological concerns.[22] Ganoczy developed a point previously suggested by others when he saw this close linkage of ecclesiology and divine election as a direct sign of Martin Bucer's influence on Calvin's early thought.[23] In the original 1536 *Institutes*, the leading ideas of the doctrine of election had been spelled out precisely in the context of discussing the fourth article of the creed.[24] At this stage, Calvin's twin concerns in grounding the church in divine election had seemed to be: 1) to provide believers with certainty that they are truly members of Christ,[25] and 2) to place the ultimate boundaries of the true church beyond ephemeral human jurisdiction.[26]

What is most important for our present purpose is the observation that it is when Calvin is discussing ecclesiology that his doctrine of election is formulated in the most consistently trinitarian terms. So, for example, in the 1559 *Institutes* he articulated his understanding of the election which constitutes believers' assurance of membership in the church as follows:

---

the external means or aids employed by the Holy Spirit to put us in communication with Jesus Christ, is altogether centered in the problem of the church" (*Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, tr. P. Mairet [Durham: Labyrinth, 1987], 291).

[22] Cf. F. Wendel, *Calvin*, 264–271, who argues convincingly that Calvin intended the doctrine of election to constitute "a theological basis for ecclesiology" (269).

[23] See A. Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin*, tr. D. Foxgrover and W. Provo (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 160–162; *Calvin, Théologien de l'Église et du Ministère*, 192 f.; and A. Lang, "Die Quellen der Institutio von 1536," *Evangelische Theologie* 3 (1936) 100–112. It should be emphasized that for Calvin, the priority of God's gracious election as the foundation of the church does not imply any corresponding denigration of the tangible, visible church. In fact, Wendel argues that the growing appreciation which Calvin shows for an organismic concept of the visible church during and after his stay in Strassbourg may also owe itself to Bucer's influence; see *Calvin*, pp. 294–295.

[24] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536 Edition*, tr. F. L. Battles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986). William Niesel calls attention to this prominence in the early *Institutes*. Cf. *The Theology of Calvin*, tr. H. Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 189.

[25] 1536 *Institutes* II.24.

[26] Ibid., II.25–29.

> all those who, by the kindness [*clementia*] of God the Father, through the working [*efficacia*] of the Holy Spirit, have entered into fellowship [*participationem venerunt*] with Christ, are set apart as God's property and personal possession. . . .[27]

The basis of believers' assurance that we are members of the church is trinitarian. At this point, what might heretofore have appeared to be a somewhat remote and abstract ideal of the church becomes in fact the very source of his emphasis on the visible church:

> The basis on which we believe the church is that we are fully convinced we are members of it. In this way our salvation rests on sure and firm supports, so that, even if the whole fabric of the world were overthrown, the church could neither totter nor fall. First, it stands by God's election, and cannot waver or fail any more than his eternal providence can. Secondly, it has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ, who will no more allow his believers to be estranged from him than that his members be rent and torn asunder. Besides, we are certain that, while we remain within the bosom of the church, the truth will always abide with us. Finally, we feel that these promises apply to us. . . . So powerful is participation in the church that it keeps us in the society of God.[28]

Here, Calvin has first drawn attention to the unwavering certainty which characterizes that awareness of participation in the church which is rooted beyond sense experience in a trinitarian understanding of our divine election.[29] But his crucial point is that it is precisely this certainty–"invisible" as it may be–which becomes the stable basis and very motivation for our faithful and active participation in the visible church (i.e., the "society of God" or "communion of saints").[30] Specifically, because by the Spirit we are assured that in Christ

[27] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.3. In the immediate context Calvin is here pointing believers to their divinely established membership in "a church which is beyond our ken" and which we need not "see . . . with the eyes or touch . . . with the hands." However, the larger context is his discussion of how the term "communion of saints" applies to the "outward church." Cf. the discussion of Ganoczy, "Observations on Calvin's Trinitarian Doctrine of Grace," tr. Keith Crim, *Probing the Reformed Tradition*, ed. E. McKee and B. Armstrong. Louisville: WJK, 1989, 96–107.

[28] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.3. The last sentence reads "*Tantum potest Ecclesiae participatio ut nos in Dei societate contineat.*"

[29] The development of Calvin's practice of anchoring even his doctrine of the "visible church" in election is treated by Wiley in "The Church as the Elect in the Theology of John Calvin," 96 ff. Although he does not emphasize the trinitarian theological basis of this practice, he does helpfully criticize the conventional and misrepresentative antithesis often posed by Calvin's critics between "visible" and "invisible" concepts of the church (see esp. 105 ff.).

[30] Cf. Eric G. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries*, vol. I (London: SPCK, 1977), 170 ff. In his classic study, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (Vol. II, tr. O. Wyon [New York: MacMillan, 1931], 581–630) Ernst Troelsch provided an immensely influ-

we are among God's elect (i.e., members of the invisible church), our commitment to the visible community of believers can be unconditional and uncompromising. This principle had tremendous practical import. If believers' sense of membership in Christ and the church were based primarily on the faithfulness of their own Christian commitment (or visible holiness, works, or even faith, subjectively understood), it would always be subject to doubt in the face of their human sin and failures. Calvin was well aware of how debilitating this subjectivistic understanding of church membership could be to the church's stability.[31]

On the other hand, when the "invisible" conception of the church was properly understood to aim at establishing the trinitarian basis and stability of the church's necessarily tangible, contextualized existence, the two perspectives could be seen as inseparable aspects of a single reality:

> . . . we have seen that holy scripture speaks of the church in two ways. Sometimes by the term "church" it means that which is actually in God's presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the church includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all of the elect from the beginning of the world. Often, however, the name "church" designates the whole multitude of people spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ. By baptism we are initiated into faith in him; by partaking in the Lord's Supper we attest our unity in true doctrine and love; in the Word of the Lord we have agreement, and for the preaching of the Word the ministry instituted by Christ is preserved. In this church are mingled many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name

---

ential construal of Calvin's ecclesiology which recognized (and stylized) the constructive relationship between Calvin's doctrine of election and the Calvinistic emphasis on a visible "holy community" which concretely lived out Christian practice in its fellowship and in every sphere of life. Cf., however, the criticisms of Milner, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church*, 65–70.

[31] The classic study of Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman (Garden City: Doubleday, 1954), describes in vivid detail the hunger for such assurance which characterized the prolific but widely unsatisfying practice of lay piety in much of the medieval church on the eve of the Reformation; cf. the more recent and balanced perspective of Stephen Ozment: "Lay Religious Attitudes on the Eve of the Reformation," *The Reformation in the Cities* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975), 15–46.

That Calvin was profoundly aware of the problems associated with more subjective criteria of church "membership" is evident from his "prosecution"—implemented in relentless legal style—of late-medieval piety in his 1544 treatise, "De Necessitate Reformandae Ecclesiae," *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. G. Baum, E. Kunitz, E. Ruess (Brunsvigae, Berlin, 1863–1900) 34, 457–534. This explains why—notable as his emphasis on church discipline was—he was consistently unwilling to make discipline a necessary "nota" of a true church.

> and outward appearance. . . . Just as we must believe, therefore, that the former church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commanded to revere and keep communion with the latter, which is called "church" in respect to human beings.[32]

The Visible Church as Matrix: Contextualized Grace

In drawing particular attention to Calvin's initial and prominent reliance upon the image of the church as "mother of all the pious,"[33] Wilhelm Niesel highlighted Calvin's distinctive emphasis on its visibility.[34] As Calvin put it:

> But because it is now our intention to discuss the visible church, let us learn even from the simple title "mother" how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels. Our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives. Furthermore, away from her bosom, one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation. . . .[35]

This image aptly communicates Calvin's growing awareness[36] that the crucial role of the church in the divine-human relationship is as the matrix in which the grace of God is seen in and communicated to human beings. As such, the visible church is the corporeal[37] human context in which the divine-human relationship occurs; the arena in and through which the drama of

[32] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.7.

[33] "*piorum omnium mater*"; cf. Calvin's title for 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.

[34] W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 182–187. W. H. Neuser also confirms Calvin's predominant emphasis on the visible church—an emphasis that those who have read Book IV only superficially often miss: "the true church is to be sought in the 'outer' rather than the 'invisible' church"; "Calvin's interest focuses on the visible church." See "Calvin's Teaching on the *notae fidelium*," 80–84. Interestingly, this interpretation emphasizes an important point of continuity between Calvin, his successor Theodore Beza, and later Calvinism. While Tadataka Maruyama argues persuasively for Beza's emphasis on the "visible church," he overlooks the clear focus on the visible church which was already characteristic of Calvin's ecclesiology; see *The Ecclesiology of Theodore Beza* (Genève: Librarie Droz, 1978), 22 ff.

[35] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.4.

[36] The understanding we indicate is not fully present until the 1559 *Institutes*.

[37] I have chosen this term because it aptly expresses 1) the tangibility and concreteness of Calvin's emphasis on the visible church; 2) the somatic character of the church's existence as Christ's body, which Calvin drew from Paul; and 3) the corporate, communal (as opposed to individualistic) nature of the human encounter with divine grace.

God's gracious self-giving is enacted.[38] For Calvin to call the church an "external means of grace" is to affirm precisely this corporeal contextuality as a crucial element in God's gracious interaction with human beings.

While Niesel did not specifically call attention to the pervasively trinitarian character of this gracious interaction, other more recent studies of Calvin's ecclesiology have made this clear.[39] For Calvin, the perichoretic unity of the trinitarian *hypostaseis* is understood as being inseparably intertwined with the communication of divine grace to human beings in the corporeal context of the church.[40] In commenting on John 17:21 (1553), he had already spelled out this connection:

> To comprehend aright what it means that Christ and the Father are one, take care not to deprive Christ of His person as Mediator. Instead, consider him as He is the head of the Church, and join him to his members. Thus the connexion will be best preserved; that, if the unity of the Son with the Father is not to be fruitless and useless, its power must be diffused through the whole body of believers. From this, too, we infer that we are one with Christ; not because he transfuses His substance into us, but because by the power of His Spirit He communicates to us His life and all the blessings He has received from the Father.[41]

Calvin had gone even further in expressing the interconnectedness of the divine life of Christ (as head of the body of the church) and that of believers (as his members) in a comment on John 14:19–20:

[38] Niesel calls the church "the sphere of the self-revelation of God and of the encounter between Christ and ourselves" (*Calvin*, 185). In spite of his alleged reduction of the divine-human relationship to a basically christological (rather than a fully trinitarian) encounter, his depiction indicates well that in the first instance for Calvin, the visible church serves as the horizontal locus of a primarily vertical relationship. Our approving citation of Niesel is not intended to affirm the occasional minimizing of the horizontal dimensions of the church's being into which Niesel falls (cf. 195), but simply to point out that Calvin views the church's horizontal dimensions as constituted and sustained by the grace of God. In Calvin's understanding of church, horizontal relationships derive from and reflect the constitutive vertical relationship of God with humanity via the Trinity.

[39] See the excellent but often overlooked study of Léopold Schümmer, *L'Ecclésiologie de Calvin à la lumière de l'Ecclesia Mater* (Bern: Peter Lang [Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte #11] 1981), esp. pp. 40–63. Cf. also Ganoczy, "Calvin's Trinitarian Doctrine of Grace," 103 f., and John Loeschen (*The Divine Community: Trinity, Church, and Ethics in Reformation Theologies* [Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc. 1981], 135 ff.), who emphasizes the trinitarian character of Calvin's understanding of the church.

[40] It is important to notice in this regard that Verna Harrison traces the original theological use of the idea of *perichoresis*, not to trinitarian doctrine per se, but rather to the interpenetration of God and creation that occurs in God's gracious dealings with human beings ("Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 58–59, 62–65).

[41] Calvin, *Comm. John* on 17:21.

> . . . our life is conjoined with Christ's and flows from it as well. In ourselves we are dead, and the life we flatter ourselves we have is the worst death. Therefore, when it is a question of obtaining life, our eyes must be directed to Christ and his life must be transferred to us by faith, so that our consciences may be surely convinced that while Christ lives we are free from all danger of destruction. For it is an immutable fact that His life would be nothing if his members were dead [*Stat enim istud fixum, nullam fore eius vitam membris mortuis*]. . . .[42]

Continuing a few sentences later to develop the same thought, he had made the trinitarian context of this interconnectedness clearer:

> . . . we cannot know by idle speculation what is the sacred and mystic union between us and Him and again between Him and the Father, but . . . the only way to know it is when He pours His life into us by the secret efficacy of the Spirit. And this is the experience of faith. . . . As the Father has placed in the Son all the fulness of blessings, so on the other hand the Son has given himself entirely to us. We are said to be in him because, grafted into his body, we are partakers of all his righteousness and all His blessings. He is said to be in us because He plainly shows by the efficacy of His Spirit that He is the author and cause of our life.[43]

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this interconnectedness of Christ and the church for the overall adequacy of Calvin's trinitarian understanding of the divine-human relationship. The trinitarian vision which might otherwise have been an abstract, isolated exercise in intellectual speculation reveals itself instead to be specific, corporeal and tangible–precisely at the point of its understanding of the church. All that Calvin had previously said in Books I–III of the 1559 *Institutes* about the trinitarian basis, pattern, and dynamic of God's relationship with human beings[44] becomes incarnate on a

[42] Cf. Calvin, *Comm. I Corinthians* on 12:12:

> Christ invests us with this honour, that He wishes to be discerned and recognized, not only as His own person, but also in His members. So the same apostle says in Ephesians 1:23 that the Church is his fulness, as if He would be mutilated in some way, were He to be separated from His members. . . . Our comfort lies in this truth, that as He and the Father are one, so we are also one with Him. That is why He shares His name with us.

Compare also *Comm. Ephesians* on 1:23:

> This is the highest honor of the Church, that, unless He is united to us, the Son of God reckons Himself in some measure imperfect. What an encouragement it is for us to hear, that, not until He has us as one with Himself, is He complete in all His parts, or does he wish to be regarded as whole!

[43] Ibid.

[44] See Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, chapters 4–6.

human level for us only insofar as by the Spirit, we live in and are nurtured by that triune God as members (in the corporeal sense) of Christ, in the womb of the church. For Calvin, God's trinitarian grace comes to human beings where we are—in the midst of the specific human structures and institutions of life. And God has ordained a specific, corporeal human community to be the normative context within and through which to communicate divine grace to the world. That community is the church.[45]

The Visible Church as Organism: Embodied Grace

A vital, organic concept of the church and its communal existence, derived from Paul's body metaphor of the church's nature and functioning, emerged from Calvin's particular emphasis on the trinitarian election and constitution of the visible church.[46] His trinitarian understanding of the catholicity of the

[45] Thus his prior development of the Christian life in Book III should not be construed as if he had focused first there on individual appropriation of God's grace as such, only to follow this individual treatment with a corporate treatment in Book IV (Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 [1987], 195 ff.). Rather, in keeping with the New Testament, the church (as a corporate and communal reality) has been the human context he has envisioned for the reception of and response to God's grace from the outset. He has simply followed his declared creedal outline (he reaffirms his commitment to this creedal structure in IV.1.2–3, in which the creedal affirmations about the church are specifically at issue), discussing the trinitarian basis, pattern, and dynamic of the divine-human relationship first (first, second, and third articles), and the specific characteristics of the human context in and by means of which divine grace is received (fourth article) afterwards in its indispensible but properly secondary place. Ronald Wallace appropriately reflects Calvin's sense of the normativity of the corporate contextuality of the church as the locus of the divine-human relationship in *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959). In Wallace's reading of Calvin, as well as our own, it is first and foremost the church (rather than the individual *per se*) for which Christ offered himself, and which is sanctified in Christ, participates in Christ, and offers itself to Christ in thankful response (1–40).

[46] See Calvin, "De Necessitate Reformandae Ecclesiae," *Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 520. Further examples of this emphasis may be found in *Comm. John* on 3:34: "it is a mutual bond of brotherly fellowship between us that none is sufficient in himself but all need one another . . . ," and *Comm. I Corinthians* on 12:27 ff.: ". . . we are not just a civil society, but, having been ingrafted into the body of Christ, we really are members of one another."

For more detailed development of Calvin's organic conception of the church, see especially the fascinating, if idealized construal of Josef Bohatec (*Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Organismusgedankens* [Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1937]), which identifies "Organismusgedanken" as a central contribution of Calvin to ecclesiological and political thought.

Ray Petry emphasizes the essentially organic conception of the church assumed in Calvin's development of the creedal clause *communio sanctorum*, spelling out the implications of this idea for the concrete life and fellowship of the church, in "Calvin's Conception of the *communio sanctorum*," *Church History* 5:3 (1936) 227–238. The discussions of Milner, *Calvin's Doctrine of*

church,[47] which from the outset Calvin had rooted in the idea that the true church is "the whole number of elect," reflects this:

> Now this society is catholic, that is, universal, because there could not be two or three churches. But all God's elect are so united and conjoined in Christ that, as they are dependent upon one Head, they also grow together into one body, being joined and knit together as are the limbs of one body. These are made truly one who live together in one faith, hope, and love, and in the same Spirit of God, called to the inheritance of eternal life.[48]

Calvin's consistent appeal to the sole headship of Christ as the fundamental principle of church order (note the underlying organic conception of the church assumed in this image) was at least partly due to his strong sense of the gracious, trinitarian ground of the church's being in divine election.[49] This led in turn to a more dynamic and interactive (rather than hierarchical) pattern of leadership in the emerging Reformed tradition.[50] Significantly, when he endeavored to depict the corporate life which characterizes the visible church as members of Christ and one another, Calvin again expressed himself in explicitly trinitarian terms:

> . . . the saints are gathered into the society of Christ on the principle that whatever benefits God confers upon them, they should in turn share with one another. This does not, however, rule out diversity of graces, inasmuch as we know the gifts of the Spirit are variously distributed.[51]

---

the Church, 7–9, and McGregor, *Corpus Christi*, 53 ff. are less sweeping, and simply point out the influence of the New Testament's organic understanding of the church on Calvin's own conception. Wendel attributes Calvin's organic concept of the church to Bucer's influence, since it is much more visible after Calvin's Strasbourg ministry (*Calvin: Origins and Development*, 296 ff.).

[47] Cf. G. S. M. Walker, "Calvin and the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 16 (1963) 371–389, who develops the relationship of Calvin's ecclesiology to that of the church catholic.

[48] 1536 *Institutes* II.21; cf. the more extended and sophisticated development of this idea, including appeal to the concept of the "invisible church," in 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.2–3.

[49] Cf. the comments of McGregor, *Corpus Christi*, 55 ff.

[50] On the empirical level, the organic concept of the church implied in Calvin's trinitarian ecclesiology took authentic expression in the practice of electing ruling elders from among the people, and in various forms of interpersonal accountability which emerged in the Reformed practice of both the ministry and the Christian life (Cf. McGregor, *Corpus Christi*, 53–60). However, practical perceptions as to the need for clear and unambiguous authority often meant this kind of dynamic, organic model was displaced in actual Reformed practice by a more centripetal concept of the ministry which emphasized the *office* of minister as the locus of the preached word. Calvin himself was not immune to this tendency (IV.1.5 f., IV.3.1–16). The Reformers' sense of the urgency of avoiding perceived Anabaptist and enthusiast excesses helps explain Calvin's conservative reluctance to thoroughly implement this organismic idea of the church.

[51] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.3.

This means that "the communion of saints" must take specific, corporeal expression in outward, visible, and even material sharing. While the ownership of private property is not forbidden,

> a community is affirmed, such as Luke describes, in which the heart and soul of the multitude of believers are one; and such as Paul has in mind when he urges the Ephesians to be "one body and one Spirit, just as" they "were called in one hope." If truly convinced that God is the common Father of all and Christ the common Head, being united in brotherly love, they cannot but share their benefits with one another.[52]

In short, through its constitution by the gracious election of the triune God, the church was intended to embody God's trinitarian grace in its common life, incarnating the perichoretic oneness of God's own trinitarian existence in its corporate interrelationships.

[52] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.3.

The Church's Worship: Visible Enactment of God's Trinitarian Grace

The trinitarian pattern which grounded the church's understanding of its existence and its communal life led in turn to a distinctive understanding of the church's worship, focused on visibly enacting the trinitarian grace of God. Calvin's ecclesiology–like those of the other magisterial reformers–willingly affirmed the four historic creedal characteristics of the church (unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity).[53] In addition, however, he shared with them the concern of establishing minimal, more concrete distinguishing marks (*symbola Ecclesiae dignoscendae*)[54] by which to discern where (among the confusing array of Reformation-era claimants) the "face of the visible church" could be

[53] *Institutes* II.21; Cf. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 8.

[54] Calvin uses this very interesting Greek loan-term (from the Greek *symbolon*) in a crucial descriptive phrase at a critical transition within his discussion of the distinguishing Reformation "marks" of the visible church at the beginning of IV.1.10. It refers most basically to either of two matching objects–especially a signet ring and its impression–which were used in the ancient world to constitute an authoritative identification of a letter, document, or piece of property. The term was drawn into the life of the early church in reference to the creeds, which of course were said in the baptismal context. In conjunction with baptism, faith in the triune God as expressed in the *symbola* constituted the distinctive identifying characteristic of believers, in their belonging to God.

However, Calvin did not hesitate to use the historically more familiar term *nota* (which had traditionally indicated the four creedal *notae ecclesiae*: unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity) alongside the term *symbola Ecclesiae dignoscendae*. Thus in 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.8 (2x), and 11 (2x), he explicitly refers to the Word and sacraments as "*notae*" by which the visible church is identified. In IV.1.8 and IV.2.12, he appears to use the terms "*symbola*" and "*notae*" as synonyms. Thus it seems clear that, although he affirmed the four traditional creedal *notae*, he was consciously setting the two Reformation marks alongside of and in parallel with them. Avis assumes that Word and sacrament function as *notae ecclesiae* for Calvin, emphasizing the well-known continuity of his thought on this point with that of Luther and Bucer (29–35, 40 ff.). He helpfully notes the "eschatological" character of the creedal marks, suggesting that this is why they could not function as empirical criteria for discerning the true visible church for the reformers.

seen.[55] Calvin's answer to the pressing Reformation question, "Where is the true church?" was not substantially different from that of the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*:[56]

> wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution.[57]

Both of these conventional Reformation marks come to visible expression only in the worship of the gathered community. Thus Calvin, speaking of the fact that "God willed that the communion of his church be maintained in [its] outward society," could emphasize the centrality of "both the ministry of the Word and participation in the sacred mysteries . . . for the gathering of the church. . . ."[58] In affirming these two marks, he was in agreement with Luther, Bucer, Melanchthon, and others, that the church was most truly the church when it was most faithful in worshiping God.

In keeping with the correspondence in Calvin's own thought between the word and the sacraments as both *symbola ecclesiae dignoscendae* and focal elements of worship, the following discussion will emphasize first how the Word, and then the sacraments, visibly enact God's trinitarian grace as the gathered, worshiping community places its faith in the triune God. As Calvin put it:

> It is therefore certain that the Lord offers us mercy and the pledge of his grace both in his sacred Word and in his sacraments.[59]

The Word and the Visibility of Grace

In his concern to discern the minimal marks of the true church, Calvin shared with Luther the tendency, when pushed, to insist on only the single mark of the Word, which he regarded as the most reliable indicator of the presence and authority of Christ as the church's center.[60] Thus, with Rome, he could

[55] Calvin's language is explicitly visual at this point. As he puts it in IV.1.9: "*Hinc nascitur nobis et emergit conspicua oculis nostris Ecclesiae facies.*" Avis discusses Calvin's addition of these diagnostic traits for the identification of the visible church in some detail in *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 29–35.

[56] Cf. P. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 25 ff.

[57] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.9; cf. 1536 *Institutes* II.29, *Opera Selecta* I: 91. Note again here the explicitly visual language.

[58] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.16. Cf. 1559 *Institutes* IV.17.44: "Thus it became the unvarying rule [in the apostolic church] that no meeting of the church should take place without the Word, prayer, partaking of the Supper, and almsgiving" (cf. 1536 *Institutes* I.14).

[59] 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.7.

[60] Cf. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, 13–35. To note Calvin's willingness when pressed to insist on only the single mark of the right preaching of the gospel is not to minimize the critical role of right celebration of the sacraments in determining whether a particular

willingly term the church *communis fidelium omnium mater*, but insisted on specifying that he was speaking of

> a church which, from incorruptible seed, begets children for immortality, and, when they are begotten, nourishes them with spiritual food (that seed and food being the Word of God) and which, by its ministry, preserves pure and intact [*integram*] the truth which God deposited within its bosom. This mark is in no way doubtful, in no way fallacious, since it is the mark which God himself impressed upon his church, by which she might be discerned.[61]

That which is most distinctive about the true church is that there, the Word of God comes to visible expression in the life of the church, as he indicates in 1559 *Institutes* IV.1:5–6:

> the church is built up solely by outward preaching, and . . . the saints are held together by one bond [*vinculo*] only: that with common accord, through learning and advancement, they keep the church order established by God.

Calvin's larger argument in this section is that the true church is constituted by the authenticity of its depiction of the gospel of grace in preaching.[62] The

---

claimant is the true church. Indeed, Calvin's rhetorical strategy in the 1536 *Institutes* (with its highly visible contrast in chapters IV and V between true and false sacraments) is intended precisely to suggest that Rome's claim to be a true church is most open to question at the point of its doctrine of the sacraments. Cf. "The Sacraments and the Visibility of Grace," next page.

Avis discusses in detail Calvin's refusal to add "discipline" as a minimal mark of the church's *esse*, while affirming his central emphasis on discipline as a mark of the church's *bene esse* (29–35, cf. 45–63). In this way, Calvin maintained a clear distinction between his own (not inconsiderable; see 1559 *Institutes* IV.12) emphasis on discipline and the more institutionally-structured manifestations of this emphasis among more rigorous Reformed communities and anabaptists. Cf. the comprehensive study of J. Plomb, *De Kerkelijke Tucht bij Calvijn* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1969).

To make this point is not to overlook the fact, emphasized by Neuser ("Calvin's Teaching on the *notae fidelium*," 86 ff.), that Calvin was willing to specify certain concrete marks by which members of the church "who profess the same God with us" could be recognized. Calvin was careful there to warn, however, that these marks must be applied according to "a certain charitable judgement," in the humble recognition that "of those who openly wear his badge, [God's] eyes alone see the one who are unfeignedly holy and will persevere to the very end—the ultimate point of salvation." In 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.8, they are delineated as 1) confession of faith, 2) example of life, and 3) partaking of the sacraments. Note the broad correspondence of these marks to the traditional threefold focus of baptismal catechesis on doctrine (the Apostles' Creed), Christian practice (the Decalogue), and worship (Lord's Prayer and Sacraments).

[61] Calvin, "De Necessitate Reformandae Ecclesiae," *Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 520.

[62] For the broader context of Calvin's understanding of preaching, see Erwin Mülhaupt, *Die Predigt Calvins, ihre Geschichte, ihre Form und ihre religiösen Grundgedanken* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931); T. H. L. Parker, *The Oracles of God: An Introduction to the Preaching of John Calvin* (London: Lutterworth, 1947); Ronald Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sac-*

predominance of vividly visual imagery throughout this discussion reinforces the impression that for Calvin, effectual preaching and teaching actually render grace visible in the church.[63] Thus he makes explicit the trinitarian movement of this kind of preaching, in which "we hear his ministers speaking just as if [God] himself spoke," by means of the dynamic interaction of Word and Spirit:[64]

> God breathes [note the pneumatic image] faith into us only by the instrument of his gospel, as Paul points out that "faith comes from hearing." Likewise, the power to save rests with God; but (as Paul again testifies) He displays [*depromit*] and unfolds it in the preaching of the gospel.[65]

The Sacraments and the Visibility of Grace

But Calvin's concern for the visible enactment of grace was also expressed in his particular understanding of the sacraments.[66] At this point his thought

---

rament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953). In the past 20 years, the study of Calvin's preaching has undergone something of a renaissance. For a summary of the recent discussion, as well as extensive bibliographical citations, see John Leith, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and its Significance for Today," in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. T. George (Louisville: WJK, 1990), 206–229. The more detailed new work *Calvin's Preaching* by T. H. L. Parker (Louisville: WJK, 1992) provides the most authoritative guide to recent developments.

[63] In preaching, Calvin says in IV.1.5, "God himself appears in our midst," in order to make us aware that "an inestimable treasure is given us in earthen vessels." "The face of God . . . shines upon us in teaching," consistent with the Old Testament admonition to "seek the face of God in the sanctuary" and its parallel principle that "the teaching of the law and the exhortation of the prophets were a living image of God." Similarly, in the New Testament Paul asserted that "in his preaching the glory of God shines in the face of Christ." "We must observe that God always revealed himself thus to the holy patriarchs in the mirror of his teaching in order to be known spiritually." (1559 *Institutes* IV.1.5; cf. IV.14.11).

Cf. the strikingly visual passage found in *Comm. Galatians* at 3:1, where he charges, "Let those who want to discharge the ministry of the gospel fitly learn not only to practice the art of public speaking, but also to penetrate into consciences, so that people may see Christ crucified and that His blood may flow. When the church has such painters she no longer needs wood and stone, that is, dead images; she no longer requires any pictures."

[64] For the trinitarian movement of preaching, see especially Calvin's discussion in 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.6, in which God's joining of the Word and Spirit in preaching renders the gospel effectual. Here, Calvin points out that Paul "not only makes himself a co-worker with God, but also assigns himself the function of imparting salvation." See also chapter 4 of Butin's *Revelation, Redemption, and Response* and the discussions of Schümmer (*L'Ecclésiologie de Calvin à la lumière de l'Ecclesia Mater*, 104 ff.) and Denis Müller, "Authorité du message et contexte autoritaire," in *Communion et Communication: Structures d'unité et modèles de communication del l'Evangile* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1978), 115–124.

[65] 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.5.

[66] There is an interesting parallel between this emphasis in Calvin and a similar preference for the Augustinian idea of the sacraments as "the Word made visible" in the theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli; cf. Joseph McClelland, *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology*

was forthrightly Augustinian.[67] He explicitly affirms Augustine's concept of a sacrament as "a visible sign of a sacred thing" and "a visible form of an invisible grace."[68] This emphasis on tangibility and visibility is evident in his own formal definition as well, which he asserts "does not differ in meaning" from that of Augustine:

> [A sacrament] is an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we in turn attest our piety toward him in the presence of the Lord and of his angels and before men. Here is another briefer definition: one may call it a testimony of divine grace toward us, confirmed by an outward sign, with mutual attestation of our piety toward him.

Calvin thinks even more specifically in terms of the visible enactment of grace when, in graphically visual imagery, he expands the Augustinian idea that a sacrament is a "visible word,"[69] adding that it "represents God's promises as painted in a picture and sets them before our sight, portrayed graphically and in the manner of icons."[70] In 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.4–6, having developed Augustine's point that it is the *Word* (or promise) joined to the element which constitutes the sacrament as such,[71] he emphasizes that the

---

of Peter Martyr Vermigli (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 128–138. More extended secondary treatments of Calvin's doctrine of the sacraments, to which we have referred, may be found in Joachim Beckmann, *Vom Sakrament bei Calvin* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926); W. F. Daankbaar, *De Sacramentsleer van Calvijn* (Amsterdam, Leiden Diss., 1941); Ronald Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957).

[67] Cf. René Bornert, *La Réforme protestante du Culte à Strasbourg au XVI^e Siècle* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 318–322.

[68] 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.1 (which dates in substance from 1536); Calvin's quotations are from Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 26:50 (J. P. Migne, ed. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* 40, 344; hereinafter cited as *MPL*), and *Letters* 105 (*MPL* 33, 401). Augustine's influence on Calvin's understanding of the sacraments was perhaps most strongly emphasized by Beckmann (*Vom Sacrament bei Calvin*).

[69] 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.4–5; cf. Augustine, *Evang. Joh.* 80.3 (*MPL* 35, 1840).

[70] Ibid. Calvin actually uses the Greek term for "icon" here: "*quod Dei promissiones velut in tabula depictas repraesentet, et sub aspectum graphice atque* eikonikos *expresseas statuat.*" Elsewhere he presents the sacraments—made effectual by God's trinitarian operation in them—as alternatives to pictoral images in 1559 *Institutes* I.11.13:

> [W]hen I ponder the intended use of the churches, it seems to me unworthy of their holiness for them to take on images other than those living and symbolical ones which the Lord has consecrated by his Word. I mean Baptism and the Lord's Supper, together with other rites by which our eyes must be too intensely gripped and too sharply affected to seek other images forged by human ingenuity.

[71] Calvin was influenced greatly by Luther's *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959]) on this point; cf. Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development*, 314.

sacrament communicates nothing by itself, but rather "seals" the promise of grace already given in the preached Word. He continues,

> But the sacraments bring the clearest promises; and they have this characteristic over and above the word because they represent them for us as painted in a picture from life. . . . Indeed, the believer, when he sees the sacraments with his own eyes, does not halt at the physical sight of them, but by those steps (which I have indicated by analogy) rises up in devout contemplation to those lofty mysteries which lie hidden in the sacraments.[72]

Although they have no intrinsic efficacy, when determined by the Word and made efficacious by the Spirit, sacraments are "mirrors in which we may contemplate the riches of God's grace, which he lavishes upon us."[73] As such, they are "pillars" or "columns" that support the faith which ultimately rests on the foundation of the Word.

> For by them he manifests himself to us . . . as far as our dullness is given to perceive, and attests his good will and love toward us more expressly than by the Word.[74]

The capacity of the sacraments—whose content is the Word and whose efficacy is the Spirit—to provide this tangible, visible support for faith is supplied by the active operation of the Triune God in them.

> Therefore, Word and sacraments confirm our faith when they set before our eyes the good will of our heavenly Father toward us, by the knowledge of whom the whole firmness of our faith stands fast and increases in strength. The Spirit confirms it when by engraving this confirmation in our minds, he makes it effective. Meanwhile, the Father of lights cannot be hindered from illumining our minds with a sort of intermediate brilliance through the sacraments, just as he illumines our bodily eyes by the rays of the sun.[75]

Worship as Trinitarian Enactment

Theologically speaking, the worship of the visible church is pivotal in Calvin's ecclesiology. This is because corporate worship is the most focused setting in which God's grace is visibly enacted in the gathered community of faith.

[72] 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.5.

[73] The action of the Spirit is emphasized in the *Geneva Catechism*, questions 310–312 (*Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 111–112), and in 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.9–11.

[74] 1559 *Institutes* IV.14.5.

[75] Ibid., IV.14.10.

Worship is the event in which the visible church—as the corporeal matrix of the divine-human relationship—is most authentically the church.[76] Not surprisingly, Calvin's understanding of the church's worship reflects the same trinitarian motifs which we have noted above in his understanding of the church's being and common life.[77] While he does not often spell it out explicitly, a trinitarian movement is pervasively implicit in the theology of his understanding of worship as the visible enactment of grace.[78]

Corresponding to the first Reformation mark of the visible church, the initiatory "downward" movement of Christian worship begins in the Father's gracious and free revelation of the divine nature to the church through the Son, by means of the Spirit.[79] Concretely, this is enacted in the proclamation of the Word according to scripture, by the empowerment and illumination of the Spirit.[80] In a fully trinitarian sense, the upward movement of human response in worship, enacted in the celebration of the sacraments (cf. the second Reformation mark) and in prayer, is also fundamentally motivated by God. Here, the accent is upon the Holy Spirit enabling authentic human response to God's grace.[81] Enacted human response—"the sacrifice of praise and

[76] Cf. 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.5 where, in the context of discussing the way in which faithful and vivid preaching constitutes the outward church (see below), he can say, ". . . believers have no greater help than public worship, for by it God raises his own folk up step by step."

[77] While they typically note the centrality of Word and sacrament (though often without correlating them explicitly with the marks of the church), previous treatments of Calvin's theology of worship have not focused on its trinitarian character: see Bernhard Buschbeck, *Die Lehre vom Gottesdienst im Werk Johannes Calvins* (Marburg: Phillipps-Unversität Inaug. Diss., 1968); H. O. Olds, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975); Rodolphe Peter, "Calvin et la Liturgie d'après l'*Institution*," *Études théologiques et religieuses* 60:3 (1985) 385–401; Teunis Brienen, *De Liturgie bij Johannes Calvijn* (Kampen: de Groot Goudriaan, 1987); and Pamela A. Moeller, *Worship in John Calvin's 1559 Institutes: With a view to contemporary liturgical renewal* (Emory Univ. Ph.D. Diss. [Ann Arbor, Univ. Micro.] 1988).

[78] Occasionally, he even sketched the dynamics of worship in explicitly trinitarian terms. For examples, see Calvin's sermons on Ephesians 2:16–19, 3:13–16, and 5:18–21 (*Corpus Reformatorum* 72: 411–423, 474–486, 721–734); *Comm. I Peter* on 2:5; and my article "Constructive Iconoclasm: Trinitarian Concern in Reformed Worship," *Studia Liturgica* 19:2 (1989) 133–142.

[79] It was this emphasis on the priority of the downward movement of worship which led to the phenomenon described by René Bornert (*La Réforme protestante du Culte à Strasbourg*, 265), in which Reformed worship typically replaced the traditional equation *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, with its exact contrary: *Lex credendi, lex orandi.*

[80] Cf. 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.5–6.

[81] This bi-directional, trinitarian movement of worship is specifically identified by Calvin in 1559 *Institutes* IV.1.6, in the course of his discussion of preaching, in which he notes the unique role of the preacher (and especially the apostle Paul) as a "co-worker of God" (with "the function of imparting salvation") because of his or her pivotal human role in both directions of the trinitarian movement of worship. The emphasis of this passage, however, is on God's own role in initiating, patterning, and motivating worship.

Thomas Torrance has frequently pointed out the emphasis in Hilary and other early church theologians (cf. *The Trinitarian Faith*, 18–22) according to which God must be known through

thanksgiving"[82]—arises from the faith that has its source in the indwelling Holy Spirit. In that Spirit, prayer,[83] devotion, and obedience are offered to God the Father, who is the proper object of worship,[84] through the Son Jesus Christ, who (being fully divine and fully human) is the mediator of the church's worship.[85]

At the same time, it is crucial to point out that Calvin characteristically re-

---

God. Hilary goes on to apply this idea to worship (*De Trinitate* 5:20 [*MPL* X, 142–143; cf. P. Schaff, ed. *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956r, 2nd ser. IX, 91]): "God cannot be apprehended except through God; even as God accepts no worship from us except through God . . . it is by God that we are initiated into the worship of God." In light of the fact that Hilary was so influential at other points in shaping Calvin's trinitarian approach, it is not unreasonable to suggest him as a possible source of Calvin's parallel sense that God alone must direct and motivate divine worship; cf. *Comm. Hebrews* on 12:27.

[82] 1559 *Institutes* IV.18.13, 16–17.

[83] An extended prayer of penitence and empowerment for times of calamity, which was intended for use at the end of special services of repentance in the Genevan churches, rises to the following trinitarian climax:

> . . . Lord, you are our Father, and we are nothing else than earth and clay; you are our Creator, and we are the workmanship of your hands; you are our Shepherd, we are your flock; you are our Redeemer, we the people redeemed by you; you are our God, we are your inheritance. . . . Therefore, O Lord, renouncing ourselves and abandoning all hope in human nature, we flee to the precious covenant by which our Lord Jesus, offering his body to you in sacrifice, has reconciled us to you. Look therefore, O Lord, not on us but on the face of Christ, that by his intercession your anger may be appeased, and your face many shine forth upon us for our joy and salvation; and receive us, that we may be guided and governed from this time forward by your Holy Spirit, and that he might regenerate us to a better life.

Cf. "La Forme des Prières et Chantz ecclésiastiques," (*Opera Selecta* II, 29).

[84] Although Calvin was quick to admit, ". . . it is impossible to praise God without also uttering the praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (*Comm. Isaiah* on 6:3; *Calvin's Commentaries*, tr. Calvin Translation Society [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949r]).

[85] The theme of Christ's priesthood, which was highly significant for Calvin, has an implicitly trinitarian character which stems from its primary reference to the relationship between the Father and the Son. It is fundamentally expressed in 1559 *Institutes* II.15.6 and II.17.14–16. In I.13.13, it is invoked in the development of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. In III.20.17–21 it is applied specifically to the corporate prayers of the worshiping church. In IV.18.16–17 it is indicated as the theological basis of the "sacrifice of thanksgiving" (cf. IV.18.13, *Comm. Hebrews* on 13:15), which is believers' active response to God in corporate worship, including "all our prayers, praises, thanksgivings, and whatever else we do in the worship of God." Calvin spells out there how Christ mediates our worship:

> And we do not appear with our gifts before God without an intercessor. The Mediator interceding for us is Christ, by whom we offer ourselves and what is ours to the Father. He is our pontiff, who has entered the heavenly sanctuary and opens a way for us to enter. He is the altar upon which we lay our gifts, that whatever we venture to do, we may undertake in him. He it is, I say, that has made us a kingdom and priests unto the Father.

The pneumatological dynamic of Christ's mediation is emphasized in *Comm. Hebrews* on 9:14 and 10:19–23, and esp. *Comm. Hebrews* on 8:1:

garded *all* human service of God as worship. This broadened the context of his sense of worship as the enactment of God's triune grace, so that it included the whole of life. The Geneva Catechism of 1543 built a comprehensive presentation of the entire Christian religion around a fourfold discussion of what it means to worship God appropriately.[86] In it, the whole Christian life, including the encompassing duties of faith, obedience, prayer, and thankfulness are all organized under the rubric of divine worship, broadly understood. Furthermore, Calvin's treatment of the Law as the summary of human duty to God in the 1559 *Institutes* carefully argues not only that "the first foundation of righteousness is the worship of God," but also that "lawful worship consists in obedience alone."[87] On the one hand, true Christian obedience begins with rightly focused and wholehearted worship. On the other hand, true worship entails ethical obedience in every aspect of life. Our obligations to God are the first table of our obedience, while our obligations to serve God in the world are the second table of our divine worship. In this thoroughly integrated understanding of the service of God in both liturgy and life, Calvin bequeathed to the Reformed tradition a sweeping vision of worship as the enactment of God's trinitarian grace. This enactment begins in the gathered community of faith, but broadens inevitably to encompass all of life.

> Because Christ suffered in the humility of the flesh, and taking the form of a servant made Himself of no reputation in the world, the apostle harks back to His ascension, by which not only the offence of the cross was removed, but also that humbling and inglorious condition which He took on Himself along with our flesh. It is by the power of the Spirit which shone out in the resurrection and ascension of Christ that the dignity of His priesthood is to be reckoned.

James Torrance has frequently called attention to this theme in Calvin's thought: see "The Vicarious Humanity and Priesthood of Christ in the Theology of John Calvin," in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor*, ed. W. Neuser (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1978), 69–84; "The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 348–369; "The Vicarious Humanity of Christ," in *The Incarnation*, ed. T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel, 1981), 127–147.

[86] Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 9–10.

[87] 1559 *Institutes* II.8.5; II.8.11.

The Church's Ministry: Visible Reflection of God's Trinitarian Grace

Calvin's ecclesiology depicts a church called to render God's trinitarian grace visible to its culture and to the world. In the first place, God's people are called to embody visibly that grace in their corporate interrelationships and their common life. In the second place, the church is called to enact visibly that grace in its worship of God, in both liturgy and life. In the third place, the church is called to reflect visibly that grace to the world beyond the church, through sharing in the threefold ministry of Christ.

By the Holy Spirit, Christ himself–the perfect image of God–embodies, enacts, and reflects the grace of the Father in his ministry, for the church *and* the world.[88] The church–united to Christ by that same Spirit–is called to share in each aspect of Christ's ministry. To the extent that it authentically embodies and enacts God's trinitarian grace, it is also enabled authentically to reflect that grace in its ministry to the world.

> For Christ invests us with this honour, that He wishes to be discerned and recognized, not only in His own Person, but also in his members.[89]

Christ's Ministry and Ours

Calvin's efforts to understand comprehensively the connection between Christ's ministry and that of the church began in earnest with the Geneva Catechism of 1542. There, he settled upon a model for understanding Christ's work that later Reformed Christians came to call "the threefold office."[90] The

[88] Cf. Randall Zachmann, "Jesus Christ as the Image of God in Calvin's Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 25:1 (April 1990) 45–62.

[89] *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* on 12:12, tr. J. W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960).

[90] Cf. Klauspeter Blaser, "Calvins Lehre von den drei Ämtern Christi," *Theologische Studien* 105, Zurich, 1970.

"threefold office" organizes our understanding of the risen Christ's ministry in the church under the three concepts of king, priest, and prophet.[91] Calvin's use of the "threefold office" was based on the assumption that as Messiah, Christ was the fulfillment of each of these three main ministry roles in the Old Testament, which had been liturgically acknowledged through ceremonial anointing. Emphasizing that the very name "Christ" means "anointed One," Calvin was careful to specify in trinitarian terms that Christ's anointing was not with oil; rather, it was an anointing "by the Father" "with the grace of the Holy Spirit."[92]

At this point it is crucial to recall Calvin's understanding of the Holy Spirit in 1559 *Institutes* III.1–3 as "the way we receive the grace of Christ" and "the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself." In trinitarian terms, this conception is built upon the theological assumption of a profound *perichoresis* of the second and third persons of the Trinity in the economic realm of the divine-human relationship. The primary purpose of Christ's threefold messianic anointing with the Holy Spirit was so that his life, death, and resurrection could count *pro nobis*; so that believers in the church could receive Christ's benefits and so share in his ministry.[93] Calvin himself made the centrality of this connection clear in the Geneva Catechism:

> Jesus Christ has received all these gifts in order that he might communicate them to us, so that all of us might receive out of his fulness. . . . He received the Holy Spirit in full perfection with all his graces, in order to lavish them upon us and distribute them, each according to the measure and portion which the Father knows to be most helpful. Thus we may draw from him—as from a fountain—all the spiritual blessings we possess.[94]

Fundamentally, then, Calvin's use of the "threefold office" was a way of emphasizing the continuity between Christ's ministry and ours. Through the

[91] The order in which each aspect of the threefold office was discussed changed over the course of Calvin's life and throughout the history of the Reformed tradition. In the Geneva Catechism, the order was king, priest, and prophet, perhaps due to an unreflective addition of the prophetic ministry to the already existing Lutheran diad of king and priest (cf. J. F. Jansen, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ* [London: James Clarke, 1956]), 23–38. By the 1559 *Institutes*, Calvin had more deliberately adopted the order prophet, king, priest. Eventually, the tradition of Reformed orthodoxy settled upon the now familiar order of prophet, priest, and king, as in the Heidelberg Catechism. More recently, Karl Barth introduced yet another intentional change in *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. IV, tr. Geoffrey Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956–1960), adopting the order priest, king, prophet. As may be imagined, dogmatic nuances and strategies of theological presentation vary according to the order adopted.

[92] Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 19.

[93] Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, chapter 6.

[94] Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 21–22.

perichoretic bond of connection established by the Holy Spirit, Christian life and ministry is rooted in and flows from the life and ministry of Christ himself. To the extent that the rubric of the threefold office of Christ helps us understand how Christ embodies, enacts, and reflects God's triune grace, it may also illuminate our efforts to understand more specifically how the Reformed churches at the turn of the twenty-first century can visibly embody, enact, and reflect the trinitarian grace of God in the world. In exploring this possibility, I will shift in these final pages to a more systematic-theological approach, as we focus on the contemporary cultural challenges that face Reformed churches in the present.

The Threefold Ministry of Christ

We must begin with the fact that Christ's own threefold ministry visibly embodies, enacts, and reflects God's trinitarian grace.[95] The importance of the economic-trinitarian *perichoresis* of Son and Spirit in understanding the connection between Christ's ministry and that of the church has already been underscored. When the emphasis is placed on the economic work of the Son, what must be said is that *the church's ministry is Christ's ministry.* In other words, Christ is the church's true and paradigmatic minister. *The church* has a ministry only insofar as it participates in and expresses the ministry of Christ. Genuine ministry is neither initiated, nor sustained, nor consumated by merely human effort and energy.

To put this point in terms of the threefold office: in the first instance, it is Christ who is prophet, king, and priest for both the church and the world. In order to explore briefly what this means in each of the three ministerial roles, I will adopt the order of discussion put forward by Karl Barth in volume IV of the *Church Dogmatics.* Barth's thoughtful twentieth-century use of the Reformed threefold office to spell out the implications of the constantly interpenetrating roles of Son and Spirit in the life and ministry of the church has contributed a new significance to the order in which each aspect of the office is discussed.[96]

[95] The discussion that follows will build on the broad theological framework of presentation that Calvin established in his chapter on the threefold office of Christ in 1559 *Institutes* I.15. It will also continue to refer occasionally to Calvin's Geneva Catechism. But in order to bridge toward our contemporary situation, appeal will also be made to the 1563 Heidelberg Catechism, which has confessional status in a wide spectrum of Reformed denominations, and to the twentieth century Reformed theology of Karl Barth. I have sought to show the pervasive influence of Calvin's Geneva Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism on Barth's treatment of Reconciliation in Volume IV of the *Church Dogmatics* in "Two Early Reformed Catechisms, the Threefold Office, and the Shape of Karl Barth's Christology" in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44 (1991) 195–214.

[96] Cf. my article "Two Early Reformed Catechisms, the Threefold Office, and the Shape of Karl Barth's Christology," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44:2.

First, we will consider the priestly office of Christ. In the Reformed tradition, our understanding of *Christ's ministry as priest* has focused around his role as Mediator: as the one who reconciles human beings to God and continuously mediates the divine-human relationship. As Calvin put it, "the priestly office belongs uniquely to Christ because by the sacrifice of his death he blotted out our own guilt and made satisfaction for our sins."[97] No additional human mediation or sacrifices need ever be added to the finished work of Christ accomplished in his atoning death on the cross, his resurrection, and his ascension. Acting as the divine-human Mediator both on behalf of God and on behalf of humanity, Christ's priestly sacrifice made possible once and for all God's forgiveness and grace in the face of human sin, and restored the divine-human relationship for all who believe.

At the same time, acting as our human representative before God, "he is an everlasting intercessor."[98] In his continous priestly ministry he makes possible the continuous relationship and interaction of Christians with God in prayer and worship.[99] Only in and through him can we "offer ourselves and our all" as sacrifices that are pleasing to God.[100] As our great high priest, Christ embodies God's trinitarian grace in his dying, rising, and living as the one Mediator between God and human beings, in order to eternally unite God with us and us with God.[101]

Next, we come to the kingly, or royal office of Christ. In the Reformed tradition, our understanding of *Christ's ministry as king* has focused around his leadership, power, and sovereignty in the life of the church and in the life of believers. The Heidelberg Catechism sees Christ's eternal kingship in his "governing us by his Word and Spirit, and defending and sustaining us in the redemption he has won for us."[102] In the *Institutes*, Calvin put it even more strongly when he said that "the Father has given all power to the Son that he may by the Son's hand govern, nourish, and sustain us, keep us in his care, and help us."[103]

It is an established Reformed principle, especially in American Presbyterian

[97] *Institutes* II.15.6.

[98] 1559 *Institutes* II.15.6.

[99] Cf. James Torrance, "The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship," *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, 348–369; "The Vicarious Humanity of Christ," in *The Incarnation*, ed. T. F. Torrance, 127–147; "The Vicarious Humanity and Priesthood of Christ in the Theology of John Calvin," in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor*, ed. W. Neuser, 69–84.

[100] 1559 *Institutes* II.15.6.

[101] Cf. Ibid., II.12.1.

[102] "The Heidelberg Catechism," in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA): Part I: Book of Confessions* (Louisville, Office of the General Assembly, 1991), 4.031.

[103] 1559 *Institutes* I.15.5.

circles, that Christ is the only head of the church. That is one Presbyterian way of confessing Christ as king. It implies that all power and authority are derivative; ultimately they trace back to the kingship of the One who, in the words of Revelation 11:15, "shall reign forever and ever." Of course, this commitment is easily overlooked or rationalized in situations where the Reformed faith is more or less "established," whether formally or informally. In such contexts, the "Theological Declaration of Barmen" makes eloquent testimony to the unique kingship of Christ. It declares, "Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death." It goes on to say, "We reject the false doctrine, as though the State over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life . . ."[104] Jesus alone is "King of kings and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 17:14).

The same principle applies in the church's internal understanding of itself. All power, authority, and leadership in the church depend on the ultimate power, authority, and leadership of Jesus Christ. But biblically speaking, the power and authority of Christ in the church are shown in an ironic inversion of everything that we tend to associate with those ideas in our day-to-day world. As Karl Barth so aptly stated it in the titles of Volume IV of his *Church Dogmatics*, Jesus Christ is "The Lord as Servant" and the "Servant as Lord."[105] Christ's power and authority are found precisely in his renunciation of normal human channels of power and authority, so that he could share the gifts and resources of God with human beings. In this, and in the example of his own sacrificial death on the cross, he redefined leadership in terms of service. In refusing to count equality with God as something to be grasped—in emptying himself of all but love and taking the form of a servant—Christ enacted the trinitarian grace of God.

Finally, in the Reformed tradition, our understanding of *Christ's ministry as prophet* has always focused around the unique revelation of God the Father that we see in the Son. God has given us this self-revelation in Christ's birth, life, words, death, resurrection, and ascension as attested in scripture. That is the point of the first 18 verses of the gospel of John, where Jesus Christ is identified as the "Word"—the "*logos*"—and the Word is identified as God. Reformed Christians have always based whatever knowledge and understanding of God we have on the apprehension of God that has grasped us in Jesus Christ. For us, the true God—the God who really is—*is* the God who makes

[104] *Book of Confessions* 8.23.

[105] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV.1–3.

the divine nature known in Christ. In a cultural milieu in which it is fashionable for people to define their own gods according to their needs, experiences, aspirations, and tastes, an awareness of the prophetic office of Jesus Christ reminds us that he is God's unique self-revelation. Christ is the ultimate criterion by which Reformed Christians identify and recognize the true God. As Calvin put it, we call Christ "prophet" because

> on coming down into the world he was the sovereign messenger and ambassador of God his Father, to give a full exposition of God's will toward the world . . .[106]

In the words of John 1:1–18, Christ—the true light that enlightens everyone—became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth. The church beheld his glory and received grace upon grace from his fulness. And as God the only Son, Jesus Christ has exegeted or fully made known God's heart. In thus revealing God, he definitively reflected God's trinitarian grace.

Reflecting God's Grace: The Threefold Ministry of the Church

We've discussed in three aspects how a clear perception of the church's ministry as Christ's ministry can better enable the church to reflect God's trinitarian grace to the world. In the first instance, it is Christ who is priest, king, and prophet for the church. But at this point, we must recall again the intimate *perichoresis* of Son and Spirit that Calvin assumes in his theology of the church's ministry. The Holy Spirit is "the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself." When we shift the accent to pneumatology, we also and immediately must turn the phrase around and say that *Christ's ministry is the church's ministry.* Each Christian believer—each baptized member of the church—is called by God and enabled by the Holy Spirit to share in Christ's ministry.

The Heidelberg Catechism emphasizes that baptized believers bear the name "Christian" because as the church we, too, are anointed by the Holy Spirit to carry forth the prophetic, priestly, and royal ministry of Christ. "Through faith," it says, "I am a limb or member of Christ and thus I am a partaker in his anointing."[107] Ursinus, who was the primary author of the catechism, expanded on this point in his *Commentary on the Heidelberg Cate-*

[106] Calvin, *Corpus Reformatorum* 34, 19–22.

[107] *Book of Confessions*, 4.032. Cf. the German original in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* Vol. III (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985r), 318: "Weil ich durch den Glauben ein Gleid (limb, member, link) Christi . . ."

chism. There he spelled out the connection between Christ's ministry and our ministry, appealing to the biblical analogy of the church as Christ's body.

> To be a member of Christ is to be engrafted into him, and to be united to him by the same Holy Spirit dwelling in him and in us, and by this Spirit to be made a possessor of such righteousness and life as is in Christ . . . Christ is the living head from whom the Holy Spirit is made to pass over into every member . . . , from whom all the members are made to draw their life, and by whom they are ruled as long as they remain united to him by the Spirit dwelling in him and us.[108]

He goes on to show that the primary implication of believer's participation in Christ's anointing by the Spirit is that we share in his threefold ministry as prophet, priest, and king. We do this by employing the gifts for ministry that the Spirit has given us.

> To be a partaker of the anointing of Christ is, therefore, 1. To be a partaker of the Holy Spirit and of his gifts, for the Spirit of Christ is not idle or inactive in us, but works the same in us that he does in Christ . . . 2. That Christ communicates his prophetical, sacerdotal, and kingly office unto us.[109]

With this in mind, we will focus for the remainder of our discussion on how recovering the connection of Christ's threefold ministry and the church's ministry can help Reformed churches to reflect visibly the trinitarian grace of God to the world, even in the midst of the much-publicized crisis that former "mainline" American churches are facing at the turn of the twenty-first century. Some overlap in terminology will be necessary here. The fundamental reason for this is that the threefold ministry of Christ—which provides the pattern for the church's ministry—does not simply reflect, but also embodies and enacts, God's trinitarian grace. In the same way, the church's ministry in and for the world inevitably derives from and includes its communal life and its worship, even as its distinctive purview in ministry is explicitly beyond itself. For these reasons, my comments assume that in its ministry, the church must embody and enact God's trinitarian grace in order to reflect authentically that grace to the world. Still, where ministry to the world is the goal, *reflecting* God's grace is the primary concern, at least until those outside the church are drawn in. Throughout history, the failure to recognize the church's distinct mandate to pursue ministry *qua* "ministry to the world" (i.e., to confuse the

[108] Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, tr. G. Williard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 177.

[109] Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 178.

church's internal life with its external mandate) has repeatedly stalled the church in ingrown, self-serving patterns unworthy of the term "ministry."

For formal purposes, I will proceed by identifying three central challenges posed to us by our secularizing and growingly "pluralistic" culture. Then I will suggest a distinctively Reformed approach to each challenge, based on the connections already indicated between Christ's threefold ministry of making God's trinitarian grace visible and the church's derivative and parallel ministry.[110]

A Priestly Ministry

Perhaps the most obvious challenge to the contemporary American church is that we are now living in a broken, disintegrating culture with fewer and fewer shared values. There was a time when at least the myth of a "Christian cultural consensus" in America could be reasonably maintained. That time is past, and we all know it.[111] In its place has come what we politely call "pluralism," but which in effect amounts to cultural chaos. The possibility of a broad cultural consensus on most issues is now gone.

From the church's perspective, this means that more and more of our neighbors and family members are making up their own rules, following self-created standards, and consequently living outside of God's design for them. Some may do this through wilful rejection of Christian values. Many more may simply lack the opportunity to be exposed adequately to those values.

Christians believe that God is the Creator of all people, and that the Creator's loving design for life is the path to human wholeness for us all. It follows that as more and more people live outside the Creator's design, they will experience greater and greater brokenness and fragmentation in their lives.

This is where the church's participation in Christ's priestly ministry comes in. The focus of Christ's priestly ministry is the reconciliation of wayward, broken people with God. When Calvin discusses Christ's priestly office in the 1559 *Institutes*, he emphasizes,

> Christ assumes the priestly role, not only to render the Father favorable and propitious toward us by an eternal law of reconciliation, but also

[110] The use of the threefold office of Christ as a rubric for understanding the ministry of the church dates back at least to John Henry Newman in the mid-nineteenth century (cf. Nicholas Lash, *Newman on Development: The Search for an Explanation in History* [Shepherdstown, West VA: Patmos Press, 1975]), and has more recently been evident in the work of the Reformed theologian Jurgen Moltmann (*The Church in the Power of the Spirit* [New York: Harper and Row, 1977], 75–132), who, however, adds a "fourth office" for both Christ and the church, that of "friend."

[111] Cf. for one helpful identification and discussion of this challenge the recent paper *An Awkward Church* by Douglas John Hall.

> to receive us as companions in this great office. For we who are defiled in ourselves, are still priests in him.[112]

Calvin supported Luther's understanding of "the priesthood of all believers."[113] Luther had been fond of emphasizing that "the greatest good which the community of faith possesses is that the forgiveness of sins is to be found in it."[114] As Reformed Christians at the close of the twentieth century, we can willingly affirm that whatever role we may play in the church in helping wayward human beings to find the reconciliation, healing, and forgiveness of the Gospel is a gracious fulfillment of Christ's priestly office.

Concretely, this means that the church must begin by being a community of reconciliation. Biblically speaking, the primary axis of Christian reconciliation is verticle. "We entreat you on behalf of Christ," the apostle Paul could say in the first century, "be reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20). But reconciliation in Christ has a necessarily horizontal axis as well. Thus Jesus admonished his followers that the claim to be reconciled to God is a hollow mockery if at the same time we are not reconciled with our fellow human beings (Matthew 5:23–24). The church is entrusted to carry forward the priesthood of Christ. Within this trust, the Gospel impels us to strive to make our congregations places of welcome, acceptance, and reconciliation for all. As we do so, the church may to some small degree embody God's trinitarian grace in its midst as we share in Christ's priestly office. In doing so, our prayer is that we will reflect that grace to the world.

[112] 1559 *Institutes* I.15.6.

[113] At the dawn of the Reformation, Martin Luther articulated this insight as a direct challenge to hierarchical, clergy-centered understandings of access to God that had developed in the church during the Middle Ages. He perceived a "detestable tyranny of clergy over the laity" ("The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," 112 f.), a tyranny that revealed a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of ministry. His alternative, drawn from the biblical book of Hebrews, was based on the conviction that Jesus Christ himself is the ultimate "high priest" who gives all believers access to God. So human intermediaries are not required. The implication, drawn from I Peter 2:9, is that in Christ, all believers share in Christ's priesthood:

> Let all . . . who know themselves to be Christians be assured of this: that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and Sacraments. However, let no one make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, we may not arrogate to ourselves, unless we are called.) And therefore the "sacrament" of ordination, if it is anything at all, is nothing else than a certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church. ("Misuse of the Mass," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36, 116, cf. 138).

I have set several statements in the plural to avoid gender-exclusive language here.

[114] Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, tr. Robert Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 316.

A Royal Ministry

A second contemporary challenge is that today we face a radical change in the relationship of former "mainline" American churches to secular authority and power. There was a time when many people perceived a kind of unofficial "coalition" between the agenda that concerned "mainline" Christians and the agenda that was addressed by America's various levels of government. But as our culture has fragmented, so has the government's ability to identify, prioritize, and address specific moral and cultural issues of general concern. As a result, we now face a political situation in which politicians are likely to take their cues from partisan lobby groups and special interests, of which the church is often perceived to be yet another instance.

In this context, the church's existing understandings of power and authority have come under radical questioning. To the extent that today's church's have any authority at all, it does not consist in access to general corridors of power in the broader culture. At every Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly, efforts are still made to speak to various levels of national and international government, but many seem not to be listening. Rather, whatever authority the church still may have is dependent upon the voluntary affiliation of a specific individual with a particular community of faith. And even that very limited authority has fallen under radical critique. Civil lawsuits have been brought against various congregations and denominations over their right to exercise church discipline even with their own voluntary members.

But what some may see as a cause for lament may actually be a providential opportunity to reassess the church's former understandings of power, authority, and leadership. Perhaps this crisis can refocus the church on the biblical and theological meaning of Christ's own power and authority and leadership. For too long, American denominations and congregations have uncritically embraced the "top-down" models of authority and leadership that were prevalent in the larger culture.

An authentically Reformed understanding of authority must derive from the Reformed commitment to Christ's unique kingship. Insofar as the church's ministry glorifies God, it is because Christ himself is the actual leader and "head of the church." "But such is the nature of his rule," Calvin clarifies, "that he shares with us all that he has received from the Father."[115] Calvin sums up the implications of Christ's kingship for the church's ministry like this:

> Hence we are furnished, as far as God knows to be expedient for us, with the gifts of the Spirit, which we lack by nature. By these first fruits we

[115] *Institutes* II.15.4.

> may perceive that we are truly joined to God in perfect blessedness. Then, relying on the power of the same Spirit, let us not doubt that we shall always be victorious over the devil, the world, and every kind of harmful thing.[116]

Our discussion of the Heidelberg Catechism above drew out the implications of Calvin's point: Christ's headship implies that the ministry of every member of his body is equally important. Biblical texts such as I Corinthians 13, Ephesians 4, and Romans 12 are the basis of that conviction. That means that for Reformed Christians, a direct implication of Christ's kingly office is the "ministry of the whole people of God." This understanding of ministry is opposed to any hierarchical understanding that sees power as trickling down from the ordained, or from denominational staff, or from self-proclaimed "experts," or from an intellectual elite.

With this in mind, let me suggest a Reformed model of leadership and authority as *biblically faithful, rightly-ordered service.* American Presbyterians, at least, have inherited a threefold polity of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Elders, and Deacons. Each of these three offices has an essential contribution to make to an adequately comprehensive understanding of church leadership. Some of the comments that follow have been informed by the very helpful recent Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly study on the *Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA).*[117]

If we are to take seriously the "ministry of the whole people of God," we need to begin with the conviction that in baptism, every member of Christ's body is anointed, gifted, and ordained by the Holy Spirit to do the work of the church's ministry. This starting point changes the focus of each of our three specially ordained leadership offices (Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Elder, Deacon). It puts that focus on modeling and enacting one aspect of authority and leadership that actually characterizes the ministry of the whole people of God. Following this line of thought, *Ministers of the Word and Sacrament* might be those who model and enact the church's concern for the biblical faithfulness that characterizes all genuine ministry. *Elders* might be those who model and enact the church's concern for the right ordering of its ministry, by discerning the Spirit's gifts in each member and empowering them for active participation in Christ's ministry. And *deacons* might be those who model and enact the church's concern to express its ministry in Christ-like, self-sacrificial service.

[116] *Institutes* II.15.4.

[117] *A Proposal for Considering the Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA)* (Louisville: The Theology and Worship Ministry Unit, 1992).

This same line of thought may be applied to the authority of broader governing bodies in the Reformed churches. If we do, the emphasis is shifted from perceived roles at the top or even the center of the church's life, or as power or money brokers who "get really important things done" at high levels. Instead, broader governing bodies can begin to see themselves as biblically faithful servants of the congregation, who help the whole church maintain a rightly ordered church life under the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ, the true Leader. If this were to happen, the pattern of Christ's kingship might ground every level of leadership in the Reformed churches. And the church might to some modest degree enact God's trinitarian grace in its midst through humble participation in Christ's royal office. The service of God in worship might become the worship of God in service. In this enactment, we could hope that our ministry would also reflect God's trinitarian grace to the world.

A Prophetic Ministry

A third contemporary challenge is that every year, a higher percentage of Americans are unchurched. Recently, the Lilly Endowment funded a massive academic evaluation of the current challenges and opportunities facing the Presbyterian Church (USA). The faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary were prominent in organizing this multi-volume study. The results are compiled in the final volume, called *The Re-forming Tradition: Presbyterians and Mainstream Protestantism.*[118] The authors of that volume focus attention on an important new study of American patterns of church attendance that found that only 20 to 30% of the nation's population actually worship on any given Sunday. Apparently, even though a high percentage of Americans still claim faith in Christ, only a much smaller percentage are making any serious effort to pass on that faith to their children by regular church participation.[119] As these unchurched young people grow up, they will be without even a superficial knowledge of Christian beliefs and values.

This statistic brings the urgency of the church's participation in Christ's prophetic ministry into sharp focus. If Christ in his prophetic office is the One who embodies God's self-revelation to human beings, then the church has a special responsibility to make the God we know in Jesus Christ known to the world. That world—to which the gospel is largely foreign—is no longer on the frontiers of Western Christendom, if it ever was. In the 1990's, it's at the church's very doorstep.[120] Simply put, in order to share in Christ's prophetic

[118] *The Presbyterian Presence*, ed. M. Coalter, J. Mulder, L. Weeks (Louisville, WJK, 1992).
[119] Ibid., 67–89.
[120] Cf. Loren Mead, *The Once and Future Church*, esp. 8–29.

office as we seek to reflect God's trinitarian grace to the world, the church must be serious about mobilizing for evangelism.

American Christians can no longer assume that our neighbors know or understand the Christian message. But we should not conclude from this that they have no interest in the Gospel. Ours is an age in which even the goal of attaining truth has been largely abandoned, even at the most sophisticated levels of academia. The best response our dying culture can muster to the fragmentation of the common values we once shared is a pervasive relativism. In this climate, truth is regarded as context-dependent and even the idea of normatively evaluating another individual's or culture's perspective on an issue is seen as imperialistic and naive.

In contrast, a fundamental premise of Christ's prophetic ministry is his surprising, even offensive claim to be "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Some have suggested that for the church to be relevant in the face of our culture's growing relativism, this striking claim to uniqueness must be transcended or at least softened. But a fascinating recent national study indicated that the conviction that Jesus Christ is the unique source of salvation was the single best predictor of consistent church participation among baby boomers.[121] It is also a central tenet that is theologically explicit throughout the Reformed confession and catechisms.[122]

Taking this claim seriously does not necessarily entail a narrowly exclusive interpretation of how a saving knowledge of Christ is bestowed on particular individuals by the Holy Spirit. Nor does it mean that the church has any right or reason to see itself as a smug group of insiders who possess the truth. To the contrary, one of the most prominent characteristics of God's Word as it was spoken through the prophets of the Old Testament was precisely its refusal to be captured, possessed, or perverted into a legitimation of the current religious status quo. By general revelation and common grace, the God Christians know in Jesus Christ is certainly at work throughout the world, evident in whatever good and truth can be found in various world-views and even in other religious perspectives.

But it does mean that Reformed Christians who embrace Christ's prophetic ministry will not hesitate to see his revelation of God the Father to the world as the basis of the church's own witness and mission. In Jesus' prayer for the church in John 17, he clarified the nature of our prophetic ministry to the world in the context of the trinitarian *perichoresis* that incorporates God's people into the oneness of the divine life:

[121] Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993).

[122] For the most recent confessional reaffirmation of this central tenet, see "The Confession of 1967," *The Book of Confessions*, 9.10.

> They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:18–23)

To the extent that we take Christ's prayer as the manifesto for our witness and mission, we may trust that the Holy Spirit will thus reflect God's triune grace to the world through us.

The Triune God and Cultural Transformation: The Church as Visible Embodiment, Enactment, and Reflection of God's Trinitarian Grace

The Reformation movement represented a tendency to perceive what was "real" in concrete, specific, tangible terms.[123] This tendency was often a dissatisfaction with a medieval church that was percieved as claiming to possess and dispense the ultimate reality of divine grace, but which failed to embody, enact, or reflect those claims authentically in the actual institutional contexts encountered by ordinary believers.

In the midst of this cultural crisis, Calvin's ecclesiology was formulated for a Reformed church that was largely in exile—a church that could only envision and work toward cultural transformation in a context of great misunderstanding and opposition. In this setting, Calvin's trinitarian vision of the church called it to be a visible "means of grace"—a tangible, corporeal, contextual matrix in which God's own trinitarian expression of divine grace to human beings was *embodied*. United to Christ by the Spirit, the church—as Christ's body—could live a vital and organic existence intended to incarnate the unconditional, electing grace by which believers share in Christ, and ultimately the perichoretically trinitarian unity of the Father and the Son in the Spirit. As this grace was embodied in the church's internal life and communal relationships, they were to echo the interactive *perichoresis* and sharing of the divine life itself. The trinitarian grace that established this communal life was visibly *enacted* in its corporate worship, in which—via Word and sacrament—the drama of God's self-giving was celebrated, focused, and displayed to the eyes of faith. A comprehensive understanding of all of life as the worship of God

[123] Cf. the discussion of Ockham's "epistemological revolution" and its importance in setting the stage for the Reformation in Stephen Ozment, *The Age of Reform (1250–1550)* (New Haven: Yale, 1980), 55–63: "Ockham's theology transformed the church into a strictly historical reality, a creature in time and an object of faith that could no longer present itself as the passageway through which all life necessarily passed en route to a preordained supernatural end" (63).

further encouraged believers to understand their service of God in the world as the enactment of God's grace. Finally, God's trinitarian grace was to be *reflected* in the church's ministry to its members and to its surrounding culture. By the Spirit, the church was enabled to participate in the threefold ministry of Christ in this call to reflect visibly God's trinitarian grace to the world.

From our present vantage point at the turn of the twentieth century–as Christendom and modernity continue to wane–this seminal Reformed ecclesiology suggests many possibilities for rethinking the relationship between American mainline Reformed churches and their rapidly changing host culture. It shows particular promise in light of the growing contemporary emphasis on formulating ecclesiology with primary reference to the empirical, visible experiences of actual Christian communities.[124] In the early 1950s, H. R. Niebuhr spoke optimistically and expansively of "Christ the Transformer of Culture." As rendered in the present study, Calvin's ecclesiology suggests a path by which Reformed churches can continue to pursue the historic Reformed vision of cultural transformation, but in a way that is at once broader and more modest. Broader, in that it encourages us to speak of the Triune God, rather than simply Christ, as the transformer of culture. More modest, in that compared to Niebuhr's post-World War II era, it reflects both the church's prior (sixteenth century) and its more recent experience of marginalization in cultures less inclined to resonate with the church's vision for them. Perhaps with these refinements, a renewing vision of cultural transformation that focuses the church on visibly embodying, enacting, and reflecting God's trinitarian grace to the world can still command the careful consideration of comtemporary Reformed churches.

In this vision, the first moment in God's trinitarian transformation of culture is that of constituting, calling, and empowering the church to *embody* visibly God's trinitarian grace in its own communal life.[125] Part two of this study

[124] Cf., for only a few examples, Inagrace T. Dietterich, "Toward a Faithful and Effective Ecclesiology," *Modern Theology* 9:4 (1993); C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit* (Scottdale, PA, Herald, 1993); Clare Watkins, "The Church as a 'Special' Case: Comments from Ecclesiology Concerning the Management of the Church," *Modern Theology* 9:4 (1993); somewhat more radically, Richard Roberts, "Spirit, Structure, and Truth in the Church," *Modern Theology* 3:1 (1986); and the previously cited discussions of Stanley Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder.

[125] Cf. the following scripture texts:

> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4–6)
>
> Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it. (I Corinthians 12:27)
>
> It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. (II Corinthians 4:6–7)

highlighted Calvin's understanding of the church as the matrix in which the trinitarian grace of God is seen in and communicated to human beings, and the corporeal human context in which the divine human relationship occurs. The clear implication for the church today is that our hopes to be an agent of cultural transformation must always begin and begin again with our own internal transformation through God's trinitarian grace.

How can this kind of internal tranformation begin and be sustained? The church itself is transformed as its own grateful reception of God's trinitarian grace is visibly *enacted* in corporate worship.[126] Part three of this study emphasized Calvin's insistence that the life of the church has its center and focal point in faithful proclamation and hearing of God's Word,[127] and in joyful celebration of Baptism and the Eucharist. Each of these movements of worship is a trinitarian event in which the drama of the divine-human relationship is visibly enacted. In and through these gracious events and all that they symbolize, God the Father centers the divine work of transforming the church, through the grace of Jesus Christ and the communion and power of the Holy Spirit. But this divine work continues as the church carries the service of God into everyday life, continuing to enact God's grace in the world, in the obedience of faith.

The third moment in God's trinitarian transformation of culture is that of constituting, calling, and empowering the church to *reflect* visibly God's trinitarian grace in its ministry in and to the world.[128] Part four of this study ar-

[126] Cf. the following scripture texts:

> I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your logical worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God–what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1–2)

> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. (II Corinthians 3:17–4:1)

[127] Karl Barth emphatically reinforced the centrality of the faithful preaching and hearing of God's Word as constitutive of the church's being in *God in Action*, tr. E. G. Homrighausen (New York: Roundtable Press, 1936), 24–31.

[128] Cf. the following scripture texts:

> You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14–16)

> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (I Peter 2:9)

ticulated the trinitarian incorporation of the church into the threefold ministry of Christ by the Holy Spirit. There, it was argued that the priestly, royal, and prophetic ministry of Christ is visibly reflected by the Holy Spirit in three parallel aspects of the church's ministry: the priestly aspect of reconciliation, the royal aspect of biblically faithful, rightly ordered service, and the prophetic aspect of witness and mission. While each of these three aspects of Christ's ministry has internal dimensions, each has an ultimately outward, world-oriented *telos*. The gospel of John in particular emphasizes the world-transforming scope of the Father's ultimate purpose in sending the Son.[129] It is in the Holy Spirit that the church is enabled—falteringly—to reflect the ministry of Christ outward to the world. As it seeks to do so, the ultimate aim is the trinitarian transformation of all human culture, to the glory of God the Father.

[129] Cf. John 1:9–10, 29; 3:16–21; 4:42; 6:33; 6:51; 8:12; 9:5; 10:36; 12:46–7; 14:31; 17:18; 21, 23. However, it does so, as even H. R. Niebuhr grudgingly notes, without sacrificing a clear sense of the church's distinction from the world, and God's unique concern for the church (*Christ and Culture*, 196–206).

Bibliography

Althaus, Paul. *The Theology of Martin Luther*, tr. Robert Schultz. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966.

Avis, Paul. *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers.* Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*, tr. Geoffrey Bromiley. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956–60.

Baur, F. C. *Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung Gottes in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Vol. III. Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1843.

Beckmann, Joachim. *Vom Sakrament bei Calvin.* Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926.

Blaser, Klauspeter. "Calvins Lehre von den drei Ämtern Christi," *Theologische Studien* 105, Zurich, 1970.

Bobrinskoy, Boris. *Le Mystère de la Trinité: Cours de théologie orthodoxe.* Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1986.

Bohatec, Josef. *Calvins Lehre von Staat und Kirche: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Organismusgedankens.* Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1937.

Bornert, René. *La Réforme protestante du Culte à Strasbourg au XVI^e Siècle.* Leiden: Brill, 1981.

Brienen, Teunis. *De Liturgie bij Johannes Calvijn.* Kampen: de Groot Goudriaan, 1987.

Brown, David. *The Divine Trinity.* LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1985.

Buess, E. "Prädestination und Kirche in Calvins Institutio," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 12:3 (1956) 347–361.

Burkhart, John. *Kingdom, Church, and Baptism: The Significance of the Doctrine of the Church in the Theology of John Calvin.* Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1959.

Buschbeck, Bernhard. *Die Lehre vom Gottesdienst im Werk Johannes Calvins.* Marburg: Phillipps-Unversität Inaug. Diss., 1968.

Butin, Philip W. "Two Early Reformed Catechisms, the Threefold Office, and the Shape of Karl Barth's Christology" in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44 (1991) 195–214.

——. *Calvin, the Trinity, and the Divine-Human Relationship.* Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1991.

——. "Constructive Iconoclasm: Trinitarian Concern in Reformed Worship," *Studia Liturgica* 19:2 (1989) 133–142.

——. *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. D. W. and T. F. Torrance, 12 Vols. Edinburgh: St. Andrew, 1959– .

——. *Calvin's Commentaries*, tr. Calvin Translation Society. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949r.

——. *In Novum Testamentum Comentarii*, ed. A. Tholuck, Amsterdam Edition. Berlin: Gustavum Eichler, 1833.

——. *Institutes of the Christian, 1536 Edition*, tr. F. L. Battles. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

——. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), tr. F. L. Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.

——. *Opera quae supersunt Omnia,* ed. G. Baum, E. Kunitz, E. Ruess, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, Vols. 29–88. Brunsvigae, Berlin, 1863–1900.

——. *Opera Selecta*, ed. P. Barth and W. Niesel. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1926.

Carroll, J. and McKinney, W. eds. *Beyond Establishment: Protestant Identity in a Post-Protestant Age.* Louisville: WJK, 1993.

Coalter, M., Mulder, J., Weeks, L. eds. *The Presbyterian Presence: The Twentieth Century Experience*, 7 vols. Louisville: WJK, 1989–1992.

"The Confession of 1967," in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA): Part I: Book of Confessions.* Louisville, Office of the General Assembly, 1991.

Courvoisier, J. *La Notion d'Église chez Bucer.* Paris: Lib. R. Alcan, 1933.

Daankbaar, W. F. *De Sacramentsleer van Calvijn.* Amsterdam, Leiden Diss., 1941.

Dietterich, Inagrace T. "Toward a Faithful and Effective Ecclesiology," *Modern Theology* 9:4 (1993).

Doumergue, Emile. *Jean Calvin: les hommes et les choses de son temps*, vol. V. Lausanne: G. Bridel, 1902.

Ganoczy, Alexandre. *Calvin: Théologien de l'Église et du Ministère.* Paris: ed. du Cerf, 1964.

——. "Observations on Calvin's Trinitarian Doctrine of Grace," tr. Keith Crim, *Probing the Reformed Tradition*, ed. E. McKee and B. Armstrong. Louisville: WJK, 1989.

——. *The Young Calvin*, tr. D. Foxgrover and W. Provo. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987.

Gassmann, Benno. *Ecclesia Reformata: Die Kirche in den reformierten Benkenntnisschriften.* Freiburg: Herder, 1968.

Gunton, Colin. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991.

Hall, Douglas John. *An Awkward Church.* Louisville: Theology and Worship Occasional Paper #5, Presbyterian Church [USA]. n.d.

Hammann, Gottfried. *Entre la Secte et la Cité: le projet d'Église du Réformateur Martin Bucer (1491–1551).* Genève: Labor et Fides, 1984.

Harrison, Verna. "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 35:1 (1991) 53–65.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *After Christendom?* Nashville: Abingdon, 1991.

Hauerwas, S. and Willimon, W. *Resident Aliens.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1989.

"The Heidelberg Catechism," in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA): Part I: Book of Confessions.* Louisville, Office of the General Assembly, 1991.

Henderson, G. D. "Priesthood of Believers," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7:1 (1954) 1–15.

Huizinga, Johan. *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman. Garden City: Doubleday, 1954.

Hunter, John Davidson. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America.* New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Jansen, J. F. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ.* London: James Clarke, 1956.

Jay, Eric G. *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries.* London: SPCK, 1977.

Jenson, Robert and Braaten, Carl, eds. *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

John of Damascus. *Writings*, tr. F. H. Chase. Washington: Catholic University of America, 1958.

Kasper, Walter. *The God of Jesus Christ*, tr. M. J. O'Connell. New York: Crossroad, 1984.

Kingdon, Robert M. *Geneva and the Coming Wars of Religion in France (1553–1563).* Genève: Librarie E. Droz, 1956.

——. *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement (1564–1572).* Genève: Librarie Droz, 1967.

Kolfhaus, W. *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin.* Neukirchen: Buchandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1939.

Koopmans, Jan. *Das Altkirchliche Dogma in der Reformation.* München: Chr. Kaiser, 1955.

Kraus, C. Norman. *The Community of the Spirit.* Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1993.

LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life.* San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991.

Lang, A. "Die Quellen der Institutio von 1536," *Evangelische Theologie* 3 (1936) 100–112.

Lash, Nicholas. *Newman on Development: The Search for an Explanation in History.* Shepherdstown, West VA: Patmos Press, 1975.

Leith, John. "Calvin's Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and its Significance for Today," in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. T. George. Louisville: WJK, 1990, 206–229.

Loeschen, John. *The Divine Community: Trinity, Church, and Ethics in Reformation Theologies.* Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc. 1981.

Luther, Martin. "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," in *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959.

——. "Misuse of the Mass," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.

Maruyama, Tadataka. *The Ecclesiology of Theodore Beza.* Genève: Librarie Droz, 1978.

McClelland, Joseph. *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli.* Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957.

McDonnell, Kilian. *Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

McGregor, Geddes. *Corpus Christi: The Nature of the Church According to the Reformed Tradition.* Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958.

McNeill, J. T. "The Church in Sixteenth Century Reformed Theology," *Journal of Theology* 22 (1942) 251–269.

Mead, Loren. *The Once and Future Church.* Washington: Alban Institute, 1991.

Migne, J. P. ed. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graecae.* Paris, 1886– . (*MPG*)

——. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina.* Paris, 1879– . (*MPL*)

Milner, Benjamin. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970.

Modern Theology 2:3 (April, 1986).

Moeller, Pamela A. *Worship in John Calvin's 1559 Institutes: With a view to contemporary liturgical renewal.* Emory Univ. Ph.D. Diss. Ann Arbor, Univ. Micro., 1988.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, tr. M. Kohl. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981.

——. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit.* New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Mülhaupt, Erwin. *Die Predigt Calvins, ihre Geschichte, ihre Form und ihre religiösen Grundgedanken.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931.

Müller, Denis. "Authorité du message et contexte autoritaire," in *Communion et Communication: Structures d'unité et modèles de communication de l'Evangile.* Genève: Labor et Fides, 1978, 115–124.

Neuser, Wilhelm. "Calvin's Teaching on the *nota fidelium*: An Unnoticed Part of the *Institutio* 4.1.8," tr. M. Burrows, in *Probing the Reformed Tradition*, ed. E. McKee and B. Armstrong (Louisville: WJK, 1989), 79–95.

Niebuhr, H. R., *Christ and Culture.* New York: Harper and Row, 1951.

Niesel, Wilhelm. *The Theology of Calvin*, tr. H. Knight. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956.

Oberman, Heiko. "John Calvin: The Mystery of His Impact," in *Calvin Studies VI.* Davidson: Davidson College Presbyterian Church, 1992, 1–14.

Olds, H. O. *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship.* Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975.

Ozment, Stephen. *The Age of Reform (1250–1550).* New Haven: Yale, 1980.

——. "Lay Religious Attitudes on the Eve of the Reformation," in *The Reformation in the Cities.* New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975, 15–46.

Parker, T. H. L. *The Oracles of God: An Introduction to the Preaching of John Calvin.* London: Lutterworth, 1947.

——. *Calvin's Preaching* by T. H. L. Parker. Louisville: WJK, 1992.

Partee, Charles. "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 [1987].

Pauck, Wilhelm. "The Idea of the Church in Christian History," *Church History* 21:3 (1952) 191–214.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Obedient Rebels.* New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

——. *Spirit vs. Structure.* New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

Peter, Rodolphe. "Calvin et la Liturgie d'après l'*Institution*," *Études théologiques et religieuses* 60:3 (1985) 385–401.
Petry, Ray. "Calvin's Conception of the "*communio sanctorum*," *Church History* 5:3 (1936) 227–238.
Plomb, J. *De Kerkelijke Tucht bij Calvijn*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1969.
Prestige, G. L. *God in Patristic Thought*. London: SPCK, 1952.
A Proposal for Considering the Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Louisville: The Theology and Worship Ministry Unit, 1992.
Rahner, Karl. *The Trinity*, tr. J. Donceel. New York: Herder, 1970.
Roberts, Richard. "Spirit, Structure, and Truth in the Church," *Modern Theology* 3:1 (1986).
Roof, Wade Clark. *A Generation of Seekers*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993.
Rupp, Gordon. "Luther and the Doctrine of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 9 (1956) 384–392.
Schaff, Philip, ed. *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956r, 2nd ser.
——. *The Creeds of Christendom*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985r.
Scholl, H. *Calvinus Catholicus*. Freiburg: Herder, 1974.
Schümmer, Léopold. *L'Ecclésiologie de Calvin à la lumière de l'Ecclesia Mater*. Bern: Peter Lang [Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte #11] 1981.
Torrance, James. "The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979, 348–369.
——. "The Vicarious Humanity and Priesthood of Christ in the Theology of John Calvin," in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor*, ed. W. Neuser. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1978, 69–84.
——. "The Vicarious Humanity of Christ," in *The Incarnation*, ed. T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: Handsel, 1981, 127–147.
Torrance, Thomas F. *Kingdom and Church*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956.
——. "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," *Calvin Theological Journal* 25:2 (Nov. 1990) 190 ff.
——. *Theological Dialogue Between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985.
——. "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: Gregory Nazianzen and John Calvin," in *Calvin Studies V*. Davidson: Davidson College Presbyterian Church, 1990.
——. *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988.
Troelsch, Ernst. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Vol. II, tr. O. Wyon. New York: MacMillan, 1931.
Ursinus, Zacharias. *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, tr. G. Williard. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.
Wainwright, Geoffrey. "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Where the Church Stands or Falls," *Interpretation* 45:2 [April 1991] 117–132.
——. *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life*. New York: Oxford, 1981.

Walker, G. S. M. "Calvin and the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 16 (1963) 371–389.

Wallace, Ronald. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life.* Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959.

——. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.

Watkins, Clare. "The Church as a 'Special' Case: Comments from Ecclesiology Concerning the Management of the Church," *Modern Theology* 9:4 (1993).

Wendel, François. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, tr. P. Mairet. Durham: Labyrinth, 1987.

Wevers, Richard F., ed. *Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin 1539: Text and Concordance*, Vol. I. Grand Rapids: Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, 1988.

Wiley, David M. "The Church as the Elect in the Theology of Calvin," *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. T. George. Louisville: WJK, 1990, 96–117.

Yoder, John Howard, ed. *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

Zachmann, Randall. "Jesus Christ as the Image of God in Calvin's Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 25:1 (April 1990) 45–62.

Printed on recycled paper.